EVENING PLAY CENTRES FOR CHILDREN

JANET PENROSE TREVELYAN

METHUEN & Co LIMITED

Author TREVELYAN
Class Mark S/LC 215.T7
Book No. 824317

UNIVERSITY
OF NOTTINGHAM
LIBRARY

Presented by

.....

.....

Catalogue No......

Shelf No......

0

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
WITHDRAWN
FROM THE LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
WITHDRAWN
FROM THE LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, NOTTINGHAM.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM
WITHDRAWN
FROM THE LIBRARY
6001787

EVENING PLAY CENTRES FOR CHILDREN

THE PASSMORE EDWARDS SETTLEMENT

EVENING PLAY CENTRES FOR CHILDREN

THE STORY OF THEIR ORIGIN AND GROWTH

BY

JANET PENROSE TREVELYAN

WITH A PREFACE BY

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

METHUEN & CO. LTD.

36 ESSEX STREET W.C.

LONDON

LC21 - 005470.

First Published in 1920

C

TO

B. C.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HAP.		PAGE
I.	Origins of the Movement—The Children's Recreation School at the Passmore Edwards Settlement . .	1
II.	The First School Play Centres, 1904-7	12
II.	The Struggle with Finance—Appeals for New Centres—Children under Probation Officers—The Police—The Parents—Growing Attendances—A Centre at Work—The Play Centre Exhibition, 1913—The Outbreak of War	26
V.	The Centres in War-time—Financial Anxiety—Economies—Air Raids—The Centres carry on—The Conversion of the Board of Education—The Board's Memorandum.	45
V.	The London Centres after the Grant—Expansion to Present Numbers—Increase in Cost—Change to the One-session Time-table—Old and New Centres—Italian Centres—Jews' Free School—People's Palace—The London County Council comes into Line . . .	65
VI.	The Play Centre Movement in the Great Provincial Towns: Manchester—Salford—Liverpool—Birmingham—Newport—Bradford—Leeds—Sunderland—Norwich . .	83
II.	Vacation Schools and Organised Playgrounds—1. The Vacation School at the Passmore Edwards Settlement—2. Other Vacation Schools in London—3. Vacation Schools Outside London—4. Playgrounds Organised by the Play Centres Committee and by the London County Council	120

APPENDICES

PAGE

I. Hints on the Organisation of a Play Centre (including the Regulations issued by the Board of Education) . . 147

II. Some Hall and Playground Games (collected by Miss Constance Craig) 153

III. Mr. Holland's Report on the Vacation School, Passmore Edwards Settlement, for 1903 171

IV. Attendance-charts of the Evening Play Centres Committee, 1918-19 179

V. Total Attendances at the London Play Centres, 1907-18 . 183

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IE PASSMORE EDWARDS SETTLEMENT . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

OY-MAKING 4
Singing Games.

AYGROUND CRICKET 20
Poplar Play Centre—Football Club.

OODWORK 24
Basket-work Class.

NGING GAMES 30
Playground Drill—Ratcliff Centre.

MNASTICS 36
Singing Games.

POSITION FOR GROUND HANDBALL 40
Cobbling Class.

FLE DRILL 54

ACATION SCHOOL 120

ACATION SCHOOL 124

EPS INTO A PLAYGROUND 134

CORNER OF A PLAYGROUND. 142

PREFATORY NOTE

IT is now twenty-two years since the first Play Centre was opened in England, at the newly-uilt Passmore Edwards Settlement in Tavistock lace. It began with a few score children coming fter school hours, and on Saturday mornings for ames, reading, painting, musical drill, and so on -amusements which a small Committee provided, y way of testing which might prove the stronger -the street habit of the St. Pancras school children ving in the tenement houses of the district, or ose simple but delightful attractions, occupations, nd hobbies, which every well-to-do home, where ildren are loved and cared for, and there is me leisure and space, offers to its boys and girls, hen school hours are over for the day.

Mrs. Trevelyan's book gives an account of the ages by which this small effort has grown into a ovement which now bids fair, within a few years, cover the whole country, so far at any rate as all e large centres of population are concerned. The uestion of *rural* Play Centres has still to be experi-ented with. I am inclined to believe that they

may be only less important than town Play Centres. But we are not yet in a position to discuss them.

As to Play Centres for children in towns, it is a perpetual and growing delight to those of us who have watched this thing from the beginning, to see how it is now affecting individuals and public bodies to whom its principles and possibilities are still new. A Director of Education under an important Northern Authority, in a recent Memorandum on the establishment of Play Centres in his City, writes: "There is no doubt that the movement is fraught with the utmost possibilities for the benefit of the rising generation. If carried to a successful issue it is bound to affect profoundly and for good the whole generation, for its purpose is nothing less than to offer to all children the benefits of the well-ordered home, and so fulfil the aim which is admittedly that of a national policy of education, viz., to afford equal opportunities for all. Furthermore, the socially civilising influence of the Play Centre will provide just the supplement that is required to the intellectual discipline of the Day School."

Such is the testimony of one of the ablest officials now engaged in provincial education, as he watches the first steps of the movement in his own town, and realises its wonderful possibilities.

What is the testimony of the teachers?

At one of the London Centres the headmaster of the school came recently to the little "Display"

which the children gave for their parents one evening. He said he had long been wanting to see what the Centre was like, and he was charmed. What struck him most, he said, was the happiness and freedom of the children ; *he could hardly believe that many of them were the same children he saw in school every day.* This he repeated twice, evidently being greatly impressed by it.

And some months ago one of my Secretaries from the London office, who for more than twenty years has rendered invaluable aid to the cause, went down, at their own request, to address a body of teachers in a great northern town where Play Centres have been recently started. The teachers to whom she spoke had most of them been working in the new Centres, and she was struck by the enthusiasm, the astonishment, almost the bewilderment, of these keen and public-spirited men and women, as one after another testified to the interest and fascination of the new work, and of the developments that seemed to be implied in it.

And the children? They show what they feel about the Play Centres by the way in which they crowd them wherever they are opened, and by the distress among the poor little souls—a distress fully shared by the Play Centre workers—when night after night, they have to be turned away from a Centre in South or East London because the school halls and class-rooms where the Centre is held are already overcrowded. But lately at one or two of

the Manchester Centres, the children were asked why they attended the Centres. The answers given are evidently spontaneous and sincere, and set one thinking :—

(*a*) "I used to sit in the house, having nothing to do nor nowhere to go. One night somebody told me that a Play Centre had been opened. I ran off at once. When I got there it had begun. When I got in the boys were all jolly and laughing. It was warm and comfortable inside."

(*b*) "I come to the Play Centre because it is free and it is so dark outside. What is the use of walking about in the dark street when you can come into a warm building like this?"

(*c*) "The best thing about the Play Centre is that every day I make a new friend."

Here we get down to the real needs, the satisfaction of which is carrying the Play Centre movement to an assured development.

First, the elementary need that a child feels for warmth and shelter in winter. The streets which for millions of our elementary school children are their only playing-place, where their hard-pressed parents, cramped in tiny rooms, or working themselves till late, inevitably turn them out after school, are for many months in the year, under our climate, a bitter nursery.

Secondly, the need for help in their play, the help of a friendly grown-up. The children of the poor, except through their school games, which are played

in school hours, rarely or never get it. But at the Play Centre, says one of these Manchester children, "every day I make a new friend". The words are simple. The pathos of them can only be realised by those who know what the friendlessness of our town children often is.

Thirdly, the need for comradeship, for play and fun *in common*, under conditions where tyranny and bullying are impossible, and all have an equal chance. The Play Centre "is such a jolly place". And indeed the atmosphere of a Centre which is going well, going as it ought to do, is always infectiously happy and sociable.

But there are many other childish needs to which the Centres bring a satisfaction which often throws new and astonishing light not only on childish need, but childish capacity.

The drawing and modelling rooms, the woodwork and toy-making classes in the London Play Centres are eagerly attended by children after their school hours, the only difficulty being to find room and teachers for those who want to join. Let it be remembered that in the case of many of the homes from which these children come, pencils, brushes, paints, paper to draw on, and a quiet corner in which to work are hard indeed to come by. The Art Centres of the L.C.C. furnish admirable training for those children who show special aptitude in their school work; but for the mass of children who will never be artists or sculptors or decorators,

while they share the almost universal instinct which makes a child delight in using a pencil or putting a bright colour on paper, the painting-rooms at the Centres are an endless pleasure, into which, no doubt, the element of free choice largely enters. They choose for themselves, and if they can only —with difficulty—colour a simple outline, red or blue or yellow—yet, when done, it is beautiful in their eyes, and they proudly take it home. But the Centre often discovers talent for itself, which the Day School has missed. The teacher in the painting-room is instructed to look out for it. And when a boy in the painting-room—it is nearly always a boy—shows up a piece of work with promise in it, he gets a little special help, is specially looked after and encouraged, as he would be in an educated home, and you may see him night after night in a corner, absorbed in his work, with a child's dreamland about him. The drawings shown at the Play Centre Exhibition of 1913 were surprising to all who saw them, and they were the fruit of purely voluntary effort, undertaken for nothing but the joy of it.

With lengthening days and summer time, the London Play Centres from April onwards are of course transferred to the school playgrounds, which are thus at last beginning to find their full and proper use. Some of the illustrations in this volume will show how varied are the summer purposes—of games, rest and handwork out of doors—to which

they may be put. The school buildings are still available for shelter, whether in heat or rain.

So much for what the Centres do for the physical, social, and intellectual needs of the child. As to their moral effects, the possibilities of the future are great. I could fill pages with the testimony of superintendents, teachers, parents, police, and magistrates, to the influence which the Centres are every day exerting upon some of the roughest and least disciplined children of our towns. But, alas, what are 200 Centres throughout England among so many! London alone ought to have from 200 to 230 Centres open every night. Then indeed we might have laid a solid foundation for the work of the *Juvenile Organisation Committees*, which are now struggling in our town areas, under the friendly guidance of the Board of Education, to cope with the needs and difficulties of the boys and girls who have left school. In my belief, and I have been in contact with both movements, the first endeavour of a Juvenile Organisation Committee in any town where it may be started, should be to secure from their local authority and from the patriotism of the town, *a proper supply of Play Centres for the town's children.* Everything that the J. O. C. of a town, or its Continuation School Committee, desires to promote and help in the lads and girls growing to maturity—intelligence, comradeship, unselfishness, delight in self-chosen occupation, accessibility to the higher pleasures—ought to be rooted and

grounded, first in the school, next in the Play Centre. Give every town child in this country access to a properly-run Play Centre, and, in my opinion, profoundly shared by many other observers, you will have done more to enable Mr. Fisher's great Education Bill to gather in its true harvest —more to help that noble army of disinterested workers in Boys' and Girls' Clubs throughout the country, than by any other means whatever.

Let me quote two contrasted utterances as an illustration. One comes from the report of an expert on several thousand cases of juvenile delinquency. Poverty, bad company, lack of means to keep a hold on children who have been dealt with in the Children's Courts—these and other causes are enumerated as producing or favouring juvenile delinquency, and the compiler of the report urgently advises that a consulting visitor should be appointed to each Children's Court, who should go to the homes, make friends with the parents, consult with them about the child, and try and influence his or her future for the best. There is no mention of Play Centres, with which, apparently, the author of the report has not been brought into contact. But I turn to a London Play Centre Report for 1915, and I find a London Police Magistrate writing from the Greenwich Police Court :—

"I am very sorry to hear that there is a falling-off in the Play Centre funds. It would be a

calamity if the local Centres or any of them should have to be closed in consequence. I have seen something of the work they are doing, and know how it keeps the boys and girls out of mischief. In the Deptford Centre especially there are, or were, boys who had been more than once in trouble at Greenwich Children's Court before there was a Play Centre there, and who have been since, night after night, quite happily and harmlessly employed in working off the superfluous energy which, otherwise applied, might have brought them again into the hands of the police."

Farther on I come upon an assurance from the Chief Commissioner of Police that the "Centres may count on any assistance Sir Edward Henry has it in his power to give, because of the work they are doing". Or a superintendent, writing: "My list of every-night boys is growing steadily. I have been able to break up a group of boys calling themselves 'the Clutching Hand Gang'. They are as amenable as possible now;" while another says: "By getting a hold on a lively leader I have been able to scatter several bands of rough boys. One such leader was so fascinated by the painting-class that I won him to the Centre, and ended his mad exploits." Or a mother during the war comes to say to a superintendent: "Oh, miss, don't you turn that boy o' mine out o' your Centre now 'is father's away fightin'! I can't do nothing with 'im."

The rapid spread of the Play Centre movement is indeed in this country the next great educational step to be taken, and upon it really depends the success of the efforts now being made by nation and Government to extend and deepen the education of our people, and to protect our growing boys and girls from the demoralising influences which at present seem to be inherent in our city life. The vast majority of our great school buildings in all our large towns are still standing useless and empty from the end of afternoon school at 4.30 or 5 till the meeting of the evening classes at about 7 o'clock. Yet in these precious hours *they really belong to the children*, who in their tenement homes, or in the crowded streets, are denied the natural heritage of healthy children—the means of play, and space to play in, under a light and wise discipline. And in these children lies the hope of England. Surely, at this time of day, it does not need urging that it is both our duty and our profit so to guard and train the children of the nation as to put a stop to the continual waste of young life and faculty which goes on in our large towns. Only through the children can we repair the ravages of this war; and in caring for them we offer our truest homage to the brave men, their fathers and their kin, who have died for England. We cannot be too jealous for each childish personality, for its safety, its growth, its happiness; and according to our sowing now, will be the future.

Others, I doubt not, if not we,
The issue of our toils shall see;
And, we forgotten and unknown,
Young children gather as their own
The harvest which the dead have sown.

MARY A. WARD.

[To this short Prefatory Note, I desire to take this opportunity of adding some expression, however inadequate, of my warm gratitude to all those who for this twenty years have co-operated in the work described in this book; to my devoted Secretaries first and foremost, Miss Bessie Churcher, Miss Gertrude Taubman, Miss Grace Blundell, who have stood by me all this time, and without whom I could have done nothing; to my colleagues of the Play Centres Committee; to the subscribers who year by year have responded, with large or small sums, to the call of my "Times" letter; to "The Times" newspaper itself, whose help has been invaluable. Above all to the present Duke of Bedford, who has been the constant friend of London children, ever since by his aid the Passmore Edwards Settlement was founded, and became the experiment ground from which have sprung Play Centres, Vacation Schools, and Physically Defective Schools, who also since 1895 has never ceased his liberal support of the work so begun; to the authorities, present and past, of the County Council and the Board of Education who have watched our work with unfailing keenness and sympathy—especially to Lord Gainford, Sir George Newman, Sir Cyril Cobb, Sir Robert Blair, Mr. B. M. Allen, Sir Amherst Selby-Bigge, and last but not least, Mr. Fisher himself, the Minister to whom all who care for national education are now turning with ever-increasing hope; to the London Play Centre staff, now some 400 in number, on whom falls night after night the strain of dealing with these thousands of children—hard-worked teachers most of them, whose gaiety, resource, love of the children, and delight

in the new work are indispensable to its success; and to the children themselves!—to the little monitors who help with the babies so eagerly and sweetly—to the little pianists of eleven and twelve whose flying fingers as they play for the dances and marches never seem to tire, and to the old Play Centre boys, many of whom after the bitter years of war come back when they can, to look at the Centre where they played before the war, and give a helping hand to the superintendents. To all these living friends—never forgetting those boy-helpers and zealous teachers who will return no more—London owes a debt which she will recognise more and more clearly as school after school in her crowded streets and lanes opens its doors to the playing children, until at last no child within her borders but may claim his or her rights in a national provision which, after fifty years, will go far to complete the great work begun by the Elementary Education Act of 1870.]

EVENING PLAY CENTRES FOR CHILDREN

CHAPTER I

Origins of the Movement—The Children's Recreation School at the Passmore Edwards Settlement

IT is now nearly five-and-twenty years since a certain dingy room in Marchmont Street, Gray's Inn Road—euphemistically known as Marchmont Hall—saw the first tentative beginnings of the Play Centre experiment. Marchmont Hall was an offshoot of the University Hall Settlement founded by Mrs. Humphry Ward in 1890, and became the scene of much devoted social service on the part of the residents of that Settlement during the early 'nineties. Lectures, concerts, and clubs filled the programme of the Hall in the evenings, but on Saturday mornings the place became the property of the children. A piano was installed on the rickety platform of the old Hall, and there under the leadership of a teacher of genius, Miss Mary Neal—who has since done so much to promote the study of old English folk-songs and dances—the children of that dreary neighbourhood were

gathered in of a Saturday morning for music and games, until their numbers threatened to overwhelm both space and helpers. It was indeed the instant response of that dense population to the effort made at Marchmont Hall that led in a few years to the building of a new and spacious home, the Passmore Edwards Settlement, where these and kindred efforts could be developed and expanded at will. Of the immense driving-power that ended with the successful opening of the Settlement in October, 1897, this is not the place to speak, but memory brings back to me visions of an all-absorbing purpose that pervaded our house during those years, of the triumphant overcoming of all difficulties, and of the gradual rising of that stately building whose beauty of design became to all of us an ever-present joy. At length on October 16, 1897, all was ready, and we held the first Saturday morning "Playroom" in the big hall on the first floor. The children from Marchmont Street crowded in in scores and in hundreds—for in the course of the morning we dealt with two batches of about 120 each—and I remember well how our tenderness for the new floor led us to provide a pair of list slippers for each child, and how these shapeless objects soon littered the floor and caused many an unofficial game of football to spring up in the midst of our "singing games". Pandemonium, in fact, reigned on that first Saturday morning, but by the time the second week came round we had brought order out of chaos—tapes

were sewn on the slippers, cardboard tickets of four different colours were provided to correspond with the aprons of the helpers, and in each quarter of the hall a vast ring of eager children went through the evolutions of "Looby Loo," "When I was a Young Girl," or "Here come Three Dukes a-Riding". From that day to this the "Saturday mornings" at the Passmore Edwards Settlement have never been intermitted, and generations of our singing children have passed out into the world, to work, to marry, to bear children of their own, or, at the last, to hallow with their bones the fields of France.

Soon, however, we found that Saturday was not the only day of the week on which the children of St. Pancras needed shepherding. Every evening there were those long hours when school and tea were over, when the children used to wander forth into the streets, out of the way of the hard-worked mother, and had nothing better to do than to play in the gutter or to run off to the well-lighted thoroughfares some distance away, there to gaze in the shop windows and to form small gangs on the lookout for accidents or fights. Counter-attractions to these delights were not difficult to provide, given an energetic band of helpers and the splendid rooms of the Passmore Edwards Settlement, and gradually the late afternoons were all filled up with different occupations—musical drill, drawing and painting, a children's library, a little girls' club, story-telling for the "under tens," basket-making and clay-modelling for the boys. I remember well how the story-

telling fell to my lot, in the winter of 1898-9, and how every Monday at 5.30 I had to cope with over 100 children ranging from three to ten, and to keep them quiet for an hour with the well-remembered tales of my own childhood. One evening, indeed, I had to cram in 136, "sitting on seventy-six chairs, two hot-water stoves, and one small table," as my diary of the time reminds me, so that it really was *too* tight a fit, and although they heard me out they broke into wild riots at the end, stormed the platform out of sheer relief from cramp, and reduced me to behave "like Ajax on his ship".[1]

In the first winter of our work at the "Passmore," as the children soon began to call it with affectionate brevity, we dealt with some 350 attendances per week, representing perhaps 250 individual children, but as the years went on these figures were gradually doubled and quadrupled. The masters and mistresses of the schools in the immediate neighbourhood began to take an interest in the tales brought back to them by the children, and presently as our organisation developed we would apply to them for lists of the children who, in their opinion, stood in most need of shelter and recreation after school. For throughout this district there were plenty of homes where both mother and father were out at work till 7 or 8 o'clock, so

[1] For the benefit of those who are not classically minded (as I seem to have been in those days!), let me remind my readers that Ajax once kept off the whole Trojan army single-handed from his beached ship by laying about him with a mighty oar. Only on this occasion I had no oar!

TOY-MAKING

SINGING GAMES

that the little ones—even if they were not locked out, as happened pretty frequently—found little to cheer them in their unlit rooms. Thus by the time that we had something to offer at the Settlement on *every* evening of the week we also had a list of "every-night" children, who had special tickets and were admitted in preference to the thronging new-comers. We had, in fact, stumbled almost unconsciously on one of the most pressing needs of our modern town-life, a need produced by bad housing conditions and by the unremitting drudgery of the slums—that of providing, on a large and systematic scale, for the leisure hours of our children. Once we had recognised the urgency of this need we felt that we could go ahead with ever greater confidence; all that we could do was but a drop in the ocean of London's need, but so far as it went it was a wholesome drop! By the winter of 1899-1900 the fame of the "Passmore" had spread to the districts north of the Euston Road and east of the Gray's Inn Road; messages from parents constantly reached us asking us to admit Sidney or Annie or Alf to the gym., the library, or the dancing, and the number of children taken in was only limited by the size of the rooms and by the number of helpers that we could press into the service. As regards these helpers, the zeal and regularity of our voluntary workers always struck me as astonishing; on Saturday mornings we had from eight to twelve; the library absorbed one or two every evening; at first the musical drill

was conducted by two volunteers, and for years a kind-hearted working-woman from the block of buildings over the way insisted on coming to help every evening with the admission and distribution of the children, never consenting to accept any remuneration. But as the work expanded in so many directions it became necessary to enlist also the professional teacher of handicrafts, gymnastics, carpentering, or folk-dancing, and a special fund was raised by Mrs. Ward and administered by the "Women's Work Committee" of the Settlement, to cover these expenses. The cost of materials for the different classes also continued to increase, but the work was so new and its appeal so irresistible that the money came in without much difficulty.

In looking back over those years it is our efforts with the older boys that seem on the whole to stand out most vividly in my remembrance. How to satisfy the restless, hungry spirits, the eager hands and active bodies of the growing boys—how to make them think a little for their neighbours, keep certain elementary rules of good behaviour and yet not be bored! At the Playrooms they often seemed to be possessed with a devil, would band together in gangs to shout and interrupt the games, until, once or twice, they had to be bodily turned out; but they bore us no malice and would turn up again next evening with a cheery "'Ere we are again, Miss!" to take part in carpentering or musical drill, where, very likely, they would be

as meek as lambs. My mother had a special class of twenty-five to thirty to whom she read aloud Stevenson or Kipling every week, or told them of her travels abroad and brought them pictures to see, and presently this class descended to me and became one of my strongest links with the "Passmore". One seemed to get through most of the English classics in the course of three or four winters, and alas, what lessons one learnt in the art of skipping! Stevenson could usually be read straight through, and Kipling and the "Prisoner of Zenda" nearly so, but "Great Expectations" was the only Dickens on which one could venture, on account of its comparative brevity, and as to Scott, I remember feeling it a real triumph to have got through "The Abbot" without a serious riot! After a time these readings developed into lectures on history with lantern slides, the audience running to over a hundred and consisting both of boys and girls, but the boys, with their sharp tongues all agog and their sociable delight in whispering, were my constant preoccupation, and the sure test of the success or failure of the lecture was whether the boys had kept quiet or not. How well I remember their yells of "Old Krujer!" at an inoffensive slide of Sir Thomas Fairfax! But usually they devoured the slides with no more than a buzz of wonder and approval, and when it came to cutting off King Charles's head, with Gow's picture on the screen to gaze at, their silence was almost uncanny, until at a challenge from the lecturer a clamour of voices arose—"'E

was a traitor!" from the boys and "'E was a martyr!" from the girls.

When the evenings lengthened out the games and classes were transferred bodily to the big garden behind the Settlement, where in the warm summer evenings different groups of children might be seen sitting under the plane-trees, sewing or painting or making scrap-books, while at a long trestle table the boys would be clay-modelling or weaving baskets. Cricket was also arranged in Regent's Park by some of the residents of the Settlement, and on Saturday mornings we abandoned the Play-rooms for a series of "Expeditions" to the various sights of London—the Zoo, the Tower, the Natural History Museum, the Houses of Parliament, and so forth—for which the children all brought their pennies for bus-fares clasped tight in grubby fingers. Here again it was the boys that usually fell to my lot, and our wanderings through the Zoo or the Houses of Parliament remain with me as some of the most amusing experiences of those years. Their unfailing curiosity about everything they came across, from the llama's habit of spitting to the probable length of Big Ben's long hand, kept one's powers of invention constantly on the stretch, and then the anxiety of cramming them all in different batches on the elephant's back for the longed-for ride, of retrieving stray members of the party that had stolen off to buy sweets, and of getting them, if possible, all on to the same bus, made these Saturday mornings a strenuous time for the single-

handed helper. It was always a moment of extreme relief when I marched them back in safety to the doors of the Settlement.

The climax of the year's work for both children and helpers came round in these first years with the Christmas Entertainment, when two performances were given in the big hall, one for children and one for parents, of all the "stunts" —as we should call them now—that the children had been learning in the previous term. Musical drill and dancing, both of a very high quality, delighted the onlookers, the singing was quite passable, and finally (in 1900) scenes from the "Midsummer Night's Dream" held us enthralled for an hour. Fairy dresses had been made by the girls' sewing-class and by many devoted helpers for weeks past, and for "Pyramus and Thisbe" the rehearsals and the dressmaking had been on the grand scale. An Irish boy of real comic genius, named Samuel Teagne, played Pyramus, and I think many tired mothers must remember to this day their gasps of delight over his antics and his groans, and the rattlings of his armour as he rolled, stone-dead, down to the footlights. In later years the annual entertainments were held in summer, under the trees in the big garden, and there in the heart of central London you might see some 800 parents and children gathered under the plane trees, watching the performers drill and dance and sing, while all Marchmont Street crowded its back windows and leads to look on.

I have dwelt thus at some length upon the "Children's Recreation School" at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, because it was the experiment from which the Play Centre movement sprang, and because to the experience gained there was due Mrs. Ward's conviction that an educational system which took no account of the child's need for play was in sore need of supplementing. The pathetic response of the teeming child-population of St. Pancras to the simple recreations that we offered them showed that the need was a profound and genuine one, and after seven years' experience in methods of organisation it was decided to make an attempt to carry the adventure further. The attendances at the Settlement had risen by the end of 1904 to 1700 a week, but if this made some sensible impression on the lives of the children in that neighbourhood, what could be said of the dreary miles of bricks and mortar farther east? Of Bethnal Green, Hoxton, Haggerston, Bow, and Poplar, or again of the mean streets to the south, Bermondsey, Lambeth, and Southwark? Or of such a specially degraded district as the slums of Notting Dale? In all these ancient boroughs the great school buildings rose, a witness to the honest desire of our generation to deal generously by the children, but every day at 4 or 4.30 their inmates trooped out, leaving them to stand gaunt and empty for the rest of the evening. It is true that the Children's Happy Evenings Association—all honour

to it for being the first to attempt any remedy—had established in about 100 schools a weekly or fortnightly evening, when from 100 to 150 children were invited through the teachers, usually as the reward for regular attendance, to spend a happy two hours in dancing, drill, quiet games, and the like. But, with the best intentions on the part of the workers (who were exclusively volunteers), such Evenings could only meet the real needs of the children to a very limited extent. Normally there would be an evening for girls and an evening for boys on alternate weeks from October to April, and as the invitations were naturally distributed over as many children as possible, the individual child could rarely attend more than four or five times in the year. A system on these lines could hold out little promise of meeting the daily needs of 800,000 children, although the spirit animating the best "Evenings" was a very valuable one. At any rate, in the winter of 1904-5, there were still 700 schools untouched by the Happy Evenings, and although these could not afford the exceptional amenities of the Settlement buildings and garden, still the attempt to use them—or some fraction of them—was well worth the making, and in the winter of 1904-5 Mrs. Ward decided that the time had come to make it.

CHAPTER II

The First School Play Centres, 1904-7

IT was in October, 1904, that a small committee was formed by Mrs. Ward, including four Members of Parliament specially interested in London affairs, to lay certain proposals for the holding of Evening Play Centres in London Schools before the Education Committee of the London County Council. Only eight Centres were at first contemplated, and a fund of £800 was raised for the first year's expenses, with a promise of continuance from the subscribers should the experiment prove successful. The Education Committee gave prompt consideration to our committee's application, and granted the free use of the Infants' hall and two or three classrooms, with free lighting and heating, in the schools named by the committee. Only the expenses of extra cleaning and caretaking were to be borne by us, and a proviso was also added that we were to be responsible for any damage caused to the school buildings by our children. We were therefore at liberty to commence operations in the seven schools we had selected (two of which were to be brigaded together as one Centre), while a seventh Centre was offered to and accepted

by a Church School in Somers Town, and the eighth was to be held in Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel. The districts in which our Council Schools were situated were as follows: Bethnal Green, Bow, Hoxton, Ratcliff, Lambeth, and Walworth.

These eight Centres having been determined upon, application was made to the various training colleges and educational agencies for suitable superintendents, for an essential feature of the scheme was that each Centre should be under the direction of a paid superintendent, with Kindergarten or Drill and Games qualifications, who would be assisted by paid and voluntary workers. The Centres were to be open on five evenings a week and on Saturday mornings, and the programme of occupations was to include musical drill, dancing, singing, games, lantern talks, and various forms of hand-work, such as clay-modelling, brush-work, doll-dressing, knitting, drawing, rug-making, basket-work, etc. There would also be opportunity for quiet games and reading. The Centres were, as a general rule, to work upon a two-session time-table, allowing for two sets of 100 children each evening. Each child would normally make two attendances per week, but would be allowed a third attendance for games on Saturday mornings, for reading in the library or for a lantern lecture.

A great many excellent teachers were provided by the various training colleges, the senior students of which found the work very useful to them on account of the experience it gave, while the Play

Centre hours (5.30-7.30) did not as a rule interfere with their regular work. They therefore either gave their services as volunteers or only asked for a small remuneration. The supply of voluntary workers was stimulated by the appointment of three or four local managers for each Centre, whose principal duty was to find a small number of regular helpers, and this system worked very well for the first year or so, until the unprecedented increase in the numbers of our children obliged us to rely more and more on the professional worker. The voluntary helper, great as are her merits in every way, does after all suffer from colds or bad headaches—or invitations!—more frequently than the professional, and as the size of our classes increased it became more and more disastrous for a roomful of children to be left unshepherded at the last moment. Still, until the War drew them away into more tragic occupations we owed a very great debt of gratitude to our voluntary workers, without whose ungrudging help the work of the Centres would have lost greatly both in quality and in extent.

The superintendents, teachers, and voluntary workers having been secured, the next step was to get the children. Cards of invitation were printed, and at each Centre the headmasters and headmistresses not only of the school at which the Centre was held but of the three or four neighbouring schools, were asked to distribute a certain number of them, choosing children who, from their home circumstances, would be most likely to benefit by the Centre.

These were the days before School Care Committees existed, so that we were bound to apply in the first instance for all such information to the teachers, but they responded nobly to the new call made upon them, and in almost every case recognised at once how much the new organisation would help their work, by helping to civilise the children. Occasionally some process of conversion was needed, especially perhaps in the case of the infant mistresses whose halls and classrooms we used, for, in spite of the utmost care on the part of our superintendents, accidents did *sometimes* occur with the multitudes of drawings that adorned the walls, or with the growing bulbs. But not many months were required to convince all the teachers with whom we had to deal that the Play Centre experiment was one of enormous value to the children whose welfare they had so much at heart, and once this was realised the Play Centres have had no firmer friends than the teachers of London's elementary schools.

On the first Monday in February, 1905, the eight Centres opened, with an average attendance of 100 to 150 children per evening, and to those who anxiously watched the experiment it was evident from the first that it would be successful. Coloured cardboard discs were dealt out to the children, the different colours admitting them to the Centre on different evenings in the week, and it was wonderful to see how they would cherish these circular badges, hanging them round their

necks on bits of tape or string, and often writing their names on them in the pride of possession.[1] Attendances gradually rose during the short spring term, then dropped a little when the games were transferred to the school playgrounds in the summer, and in the autumn rose again with a rush, the Centres at Bethnal Green and Hoxton in particular nearly doubling their spring numbers. At these first Centres a system of "Double Sessions" was adopted for four evenings of the week (Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays) whereby a first set of children was admitted from 5.30 to 6.30 and a second set from 6.30 to 7.30, while on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings the same children remained for the whole period. "An hour may seem a short attendance," wrote Mrs. Ward in her report to the L.C.C. in 1907, "but when one considers the going and coming, and the fact that the children are always at the gate at least a quarter of an hour before the Centre opens, it will be seen that the Play Centre attendance occupies certainly an hour and a half of the child's evening, which in the majority of cases is enough. The homeless and neglected children can, however, attend both sessions and every evening."

It is in the records of these "every-evening children" that some of our most pathetic cases are naturally found. The superintendents frequently visited their homes, and made special notes on the cases, from which I take the following extracts :—

[1] This system has now been discontinued.

"C. D. As wild a boy as it is possible to find. Just runs wild. Mother quite respectable, but is incapable of looking after him. Boy now continually at the Centre."

"H. O. A boy who has been made to feel that he is in every one's way. Father chronic invalid. Mother unable to support her child properly. At times he is passed around from one married sister to another, who each in turn tells the boy that she is unable to keep him. Boy of a sour disposition. Sells newspapers and roams the streets. Fond of coming to the Centre, where he seems to look for sympathy."

"E. C. A boy from a most respectable home. During his mother's long illness he began to realise the delights of the streets, although only seven years old. Having been to visit Mrs. C. several times I felt sorry to see this really delightful child turning rude and insolent to his mother, and suggested the Play Centre. Here Ernie is a model child, and his mother's verdict is: '*Can* you do with him every evening? He comes home so good, and goes to bed quite quietly.'"

"E. P. A motherless girl of twelve. Has just been made a monitor, and thus risen to the desired position of being an 'every evening child'. This week she is librarian, and when I leave her in charge of forty or fifty books and thirty boys and girls, and come back to the room to find perfect order, and again when at 7 o'clock I find Elsie silently putting the books away, I find

it hard to realise that she is the rough girl I used to know."

"M. L. Entered the Play Centre, I believe, the evening it opened, nearly three years ago, and she has, I think, been absent from it one evening! She lives in one of the worst streets adjoining the canal, and from what I have seen of her family I should say she had not many home advantages. I can just see her now when she first came—rushing madly up and down the playground and refusing to play with anyone. Now she is toy-box monitor, and about every six weeks she spends an evening in a quiet corner, quite alone, or perhaps helped by her assistant, tidying her box. At intervals she is seen hurrying along with a waste-paper basket full of rubbish, or a lost treasure from the cupboard, and at 7 o'clock I am shown with pride a tidy box, a pile of rubbish, and a second pile of 'these what I wasn't sure about'."

"F. G. 'Mother says, can I come every night?' was the request made by Florrie G. On enquiry I found Mrs. G. is a widow; she goes out washing, and does not return until 10 o'clock at night, and so, evening after evening, wet or fine, Florrie stands at the door of the Play Centre, until the happy moment when the door opens and an eager voice says, 'Miss, can I go in the toy-room?'"

"Three Motherless Children. 'Oh, I do like that Play Centre for them!' was a remark made by a most respectable father of three motherless

children, aged fourteen, twelve, and nine. 'You see, I'm out, and their aunt she don't understand children. She's that strict it worries me.' 'Miss, Auntie says could we come every night? She don't like us in the streets,' pleaded the eldest, and so they were all admitted every evening. Ethel has just gone to work, but at 6.30 she is generally to be seen slipping quietly in, after a day at the machine, and joining in singing games or 'minding' the toy-room."

"G.'s (three boys). From fairly decent home, but neglected, and allowed to be in the streets at all hours. When I first visited Mrs. G. she bewailed their insolence, and said that they were always in mischief when they came from school. They all gave a lot of trouble at the Play Centre at first—twice they were not allowed to come for some time, but were taken back on the mother's begging for another trial. One is now a monitor, and generally quite equal to any impish new boy's tricks, and Mrs. G. says that they are usually quite ready to go indoors quietly to bed. She only wishes the Play Centre opened on Sundays!"

The year 1905 ended with a total weekly attendance, at all the Centres, of 5846 children, and their progress in the next year was so rapid that by December, 1906, these figures were nearly doubled, reaching 10,030. Two of the original centres had been closed, owing to the inadequacy of the premises, and three new centres opened—in Battersea, Fulham, and Poplar. And indeed the further our

indefatigable secretaries, Miss Churcher and Miss Taubman, went in their investigations, the more convincing were the proofs they brought of the almost universal need for Play Centres. Here is the testimony of a Hoxton schoolmaster, who had made some real attempt to familiarise himself with the home life of his boys. "I will only write of that which I have seen and come in contact with during my twenty-two years as a teacher in Hoxton. Many of the families live in one room, and often during the whole of the evening the children are huddled together here, in this one ill-lit and badly-ventilated room. Father very soon goes out to the public house, and probably mother too; result—the children wait until they return before going to bed. A hard case is that where the mother goes to work and returns, perhaps, at 8 p.m. or later. Children cannot be trusted indoors, they therefore play in the streets. If they are allowed indoors they must not have light—it would be dangerous and also expensive. They naturally, therefore, seek the streets, where they play or huddle together 'until mother comes home'. Many a plan is here laid for petty theft. The smaller ones are encouraged to beg from the shopkeepers, and are often *compelled* by the older ones to steal from the shops whilst they, the older ones, wait round the corner. I have seen twenty children of all ages playing outside a public house for hours, amid sights which render them callous. If it rains they seek a sheltered side street, and play there to the accompaniment of virulent

PLAYGROUND CRICKET

POPLAR PLAY CENTRE FOOTBALL CLUB

abuse from the occupiers of the houses. My experience of London children is that they do not know *how* to play. It would be a good work merely to teach them how to play. But again, speaking from twenty-two years' experience of boys in London, no game is enjoyed by them which does not give opportunity for *gambling*. They gamble with buttons, screws, cherry-stones, and picture-cards from packets of cigarettes. I have seen boys playing a real game of "banker" with these picture-cards, sitting silently for two hours at a stretch absorbed in the game."

To these doubtful occupations we opposed the attraction of *something to do* or *something to make* at the Play Centre, and for the bigger boys handwork of every sort was an unfailing magnet. "Perhaps the most striking revelation of the whole work," wrote Mrs. Ward in her Report to the L.C.C., "has been the positive hunger for hand occupation which exists among the older children. The attendances at the handwork classes drop off a little when June begins, and from June to October 1 they are better discontinued in favour of cricket, swimming, and outdoor games in general. But from October onwards through the whole winter and up to the end of May, the demand for handwork never slackens. Two or three times the number of children who are now being taught would eagerly come to the classes if we could admit them. Basket-work, woodwork, and cobbling are unfailing delights. Rough boys, who would

soon, if left to themselves, become on leaving school a nuisance to the community and to the police, can be got hold of through handwork, and in no other way. And when once the taste is acquired, there remains the strong probability that after school is over they will be drawn into the net of Evening Classes and Polytechnics, and so rescued for an honest life." At nearly all the Centres we found that a Cobbling Class was one of the most attractive that we could offer; a local shoemaker was engaged,[1] and a class of about fifteen older boys opened, and since quite three times that number were eager to join, the places usually had to be assigned by lot. First the boys were taught to patch and sole their own broken-down boots, till their pride and astonishment at the result were delightful to see; then gradually they would bring all the family repairs, or do those of other children who came to the Centre, and one boy at the Poplar Centre actually taught his father to cobble! This family were emigrated to Canada a little later by the Poplar Distress Committee, and in a letter received by the Superintendent soon after their arrival the father wrote: "Whatever happens to us in this big, lonely country we shall never forget the Play Centre. Even on board we were able to earn a little by patching the passengers' boots, and they said the repairs were most 'shoppy'."

Woodwork and basket-making were equally successful in attracting the older boys, and in our choice

[1] Now our cobbling teachers are all regular L.C.C. Instructors.

of schools for the Centres we were largely guided by the consideration as to whether or not they possessed Manual Training Centres. Since only about one in five of our London Schools were equipped with them, however, it was not always possible to locate the Centres at those schools; but wherever we did have the use of a Manual Training Centre we decided from the first to open our classes mainly to those boys who, from their backwardness in school work, would have no chance of any manual training as part of their school curriculum. At the Hoxton Centre, for instance, we held three woodwork classes a week, under the Manual Training Instructor employed by the L.C.C., and of the seventy-five boys over eleven who attended these classes, sixty-three would have had no chance of Manual Training in their ordinary school course. At the Ratcliff Centre we had an attendance of eighty boys per week for woodwork, and anyone who visited these classes on a wet, dark evening, and beheld the energy and perseverance with which the boys handled their tools, and the good work they turned out, could not fail to be convinced that here again was a case of genuine need, genuine *tool-hunger*, adequately met by a very simple provision.

Meanwhile the success of the Play Centre experiment had drawn the attention of Parliament towards the whole problem of the State's obligation in the matter of the children's play-time, and in 1906 the

opportunity arose on Mr. Birrell's Education Bill for getting some real recognition of the Play Centre principle embodied in an Act of Parliament. Mrs. Ward and the Play Centre Committee worked hard to get a suitable clause drafted and accepted by the authorities, and on one memorable evening Mrs. Ward took Mr. Birrell to the Somers Town Play Centre and convinced him by ocular demonstration that the thing was both possible and desirable. Finally a clause was embodied in the Bill, by which power was given to any Local Education Authority "to provide for children attending a public elementary school, vacation schools, vacation classes, play centres, or means of recreation during their holidays or at such other times as the Local Education Authority may prescribe, in the schoolhouse or in some other suitable place in the vicinity". The Children's Happy Evenings Association opposed the Clause, on the ground that it might endanger the work of voluntary associations, and sent a deputation to Mr. Birrell to explain their apprehensions and to plead at any rate for the insertion of the following sub-clause: "Provided that in any exercise of powers under this section, the Local Education Authority shall encourage and assist the continuance or establishment of Voluntary Agencies and associate with itself representatives of Voluntary Associations for the purpose". Mr. Birrell practically accepted the sub-clause, provided that the word "may" were substituted for "shall," and in this form the clause passed the House of Lords in

WOODWORK

BASKET-WORK CLASS

November, 1906. Mr. Sydney Buxton, in a speech at the opening of our Vacation School that summer, amused us all by saying that he felt sure the clause would go down to history as the "Mary Ward Clause". But the Bill was wrecked upon other rocks than this, and in the next year a smaller Bill, known as the "Education (Administrative Provisions) Bill, 1907," safely passed both Houses of Parliament, embodying the clause which was to be the Children's Charter in the matter of organised recreation after school hours. Our Committee rejoiced exceedingly at the result, for it foresaw that the problem of wholesome occupation during play-time was bigger than any voluntary association could cope with, and it looked to that fruitful co-operation between the State and the volunteer which has so often, in this country of compromises, led the way to reform.

But it was one thing to *enable* the Local Authorities to spend money on the play-time of their children, and another to convince them of the necessity of doing so. As things turned out, the country was not yet ready for so great an extension of its educational system, and another ten years of arduous work was necessary before the Board of Education could take the decisive step which has opened the way to Play Centres and Recreation Schools in every part of the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER III

The Struggle with Finance—Appeals for New Centres—Children under Probation Officers—The Police—The Parents—Growing Attendances—A Centre at Work—The Play Centre Exhibition, 1913—The Outbreak of War

THE cost of each Centre during the first year of their existence (1905) was about £120, but with the continuous rise in attendances the cost also was bound to increase, so that by the end of 1907 it had reached £240 per Centre and by 1912, £280. The increase was mainly accounted for by the additional teaching required for the handwork, drill, and gymnastic classes—an addition of nearly £1000 between 1905 and 1907—but this expenditure was amply justified by the results obtained, for in no other way could the children have been permanently attracted from the life of the streets. The problem, however, of raising the large and increasing sums that were annually required, and of meeting the demands for new Centres that soon began to reach us, was one that taxed Mrs. Ward's resources to the uttermost, and I remember many crises in the Play Centre affairs, when we were faced with the necessity of closing one or two of the Centres unless immediate help could be forth-

coming. But, somehow or other, these crises always *were* surmounted, now by the conversion of some rich City Company to our cause, now by the capture of some fresh London landlord, anxious to acknowledge in this way the debt he owed to London's children, now, perhaps, by a direct approach to the owners of some big factory in a district served by a Play Centre. But at the end of the year the accounts usually showed a deficit of several hundred pounds, and then Mrs. Ward would gather up the most remarkable facts of the year's work in a letter to "The Times," and by the sheer persuasiveness of what she had to tell would compel the kind-hearted to contribute their guineas. Usually these letters brought in from £400 to £600. Thus we carried on, gradually increasing the number of Centres as our funds permitted it, but the precariousness of the whole situation—depending solely as it did upon Mrs. Ward's power to maintain, year after year, the very large subscription list required—made the question of State assistance an ever-present one in our thoughts. After the Act of 1907 had been passed, Mrs. Ward made an appeal to the London County Council to defray the cost of the Handwork, Drill, and Gymnastic classes held at all the Centres, but the Council, burdened in 1908 with the cost of School Dinners and Medical Inspections, refused to go further than to remit the charge they had been making us for the cleaning and caretaking of the schools. This amounted to a grant of about £20 per Centre, and

the money so saved was gladly used in the arrangement of new classes and the admission of fresh children, but did not give any permanent relief to our finances.

In the meantime letters began to reach our office (a room at the Passmore Edwards Settlement) from some of the newly-established School Care Committees of London's poorest districts, appealing for the establishment of Play Centres in their schools.

"The Care Committee of this school (Riley Street, Bermondsey)," wrote the Chairman in 1911, "understand that there is some possibility of getting a Play Centre provided somewhere in Bermondsey, and they would like to point out how much a provision of this sort is needed. A large number of the mothers of the children work in the local factories, and they do not return home until some hours after the children have left school. A good many children have very little supervision during the earlier hours of the evening—the streets, even on damp, dirty nights, provide their only playground. There is no doubt that the undisciplined life of the streets helps to counteract the efforts made by the Teachers during school hours, and makes it very difficult to give effective training in orderly and industrious habits. The children have no idea of recreative occupation, and begin even in their school days to loaf about the corners of the streets—and some of them inevitably become regular hooligans." Another Care Committee in South London, asking us for help in starting a Play

Centre, stated that they had carefully investigated the cases of 100 children from one school, and that 67 of these were found to be *locked out of their homes* till seven, eight, and even nine o'clock at night. And of these 67, one-third were under 7 years of age. This was borne out by an appeal we received from the owner of a jam factory in the same district, who offered to defray part of the cost of a Play Centre if it could be established near his works, *because the children used to come down to the factory gates in the evenings and cry till their mothers came out.*

Such appeals were not to be resisted, and gradually the numbers of our Centres rose from eight to twelve (1908), from twelve to fifteen (1910), from fifteen to twenty (1914). Our co-operation with the Care Committees became closer, and in Deptford an interesting experiment was carried out, by which a local Care Committee undertook to provide a regular band of voluntary workers if we on our side would supply a superintendent and assume responsibility for the Centre before the London County Council. This arrangement has worked excellently, and the Deptford Centre is now an "affiliated" one administered by its local Committee, which has succeeded in raising half the funds required for its maintenance, while we have provided the other half.

Not only the Care Committees, however, but even the police and the magistrates began to raise their voices in favour of Play Centres. Mr.

Samuel's Children's Act (1908) had created the system of "Probation Officers" for the supervision of youthful offenders, and wherever a Play Centre was within reach it became the practice of these officers (two or three of whom were chosen from among our superintendents) to assign the boys under their care to the Centre as every-night children. The superintendents were asked to keep a special eye on these cases, and the following reports are typical of the kind of difficulties that we or their parents had to contend with :—

"E. T., 9 years. Visited home October 4, and saw Mrs. T. ; very decent, clean-looking place. Said she had heard about the Play Centre. She had very little control over the boy, though he was only nine ; he *would* rove all over London in spite of all her trying to keep him in—not mischief or badness, but simply for want of something to do. Was very grateful that he should be allowed to attend every night, and promised to take him herself to-night."

"E. B., 9 years. Reported as having been in a Remand Home for a week for begging. The mother said the streets had got such a hold on him that she had now always to keep him indoors after he had been brought home from school by a bigger brother. She agreed, however, to try letting him go to the Garden Evenings at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, which is fortunately very near his home."

Some weeks later, the superintendent reports :

SINGING GAMES

PLAYGROUND DRILL—RATCLIFF CENTRE

"E. B. has been fairly regular in attendance at the Garden, and when not here has nearly always come and given me a shout to say that he has the baby to mind, and so cannot come. He is a very affectionate little fellow, but difficult to manage, as he wants so much attention. He is never happy with any game or play for more than ten minutes at a time, and his constant cry is, 'What can I do next?' When the winter classes re-open next week I think he will at first have to be my special monitor and run about on little errands for me. He is very fond of being read to, and takes an intelligent interest in what is being read to him, but *he* must be the one you are reading to, and no notice must be taken of anyone else. At present I think the only way to influence him is to try and gain his affection."

"A. and F. N., 11 and 9 years. Charged with begging. After being for six months at the Hoxton Centre as every-night children, the superintendent reports: 'Mrs. N. has been much distressed when the boys got into trouble. I promised to let her know every time they failed to attend the Play Centre. This has happened only once, however! A. has shown a great interest in painting and drawing, and has some originality; he also reads most diligently in the library. We cannot altogether trust the boy yet, but when (under supervision) he is allowed to do monitor's work, he does it extremely well. F. has shown no particular talent, but he is regular at the Centre, and appears to be very happy'."

This method of curing the lawlessness of the London street-boy very soon began to draw the attention of the police and the Home Office authorities generally. "It seems to me," wrote a probation officer, "that Play Centres are just as necessary as free meals, for the morally starved children." The police on beats round our Centres used to tell the superintendents that the Centres enormously lightened their work, and that they would like to see them extended all over London. And presently a hard-working stipendiary magistrate at Woolwich, who had heard of the Centres from his probation officer, wrote to Mrs. Ward to appeal for a Centre in that district, and promised to raise local funds in its support. A Centre was accordingly opened at Woolwich in February, 1913, under the same arrangement as the Deptford Centre—that is to say, our Committee supplying and paying the superintendent, and the local Committee providing half the remaining cost of the Centre and finding some voluntary helpers. One pictures the magistrate (Mr. Symmons) looking in on a raw winter evening and recognising some juvenile acquaintance of the Courts, now patching the family's boots, or absorbed in draughts or "snakes and ladders"!

But if these were the opinions of the police, what of the parents? What of the many thousands of men and women with whom we came in contact, whose lives were one continual struggle with poverty, illness, and dirt, in crowded "buildings" or in the

slums of Bethnal Green or Bermondsey? Did they grudge us their children, or feel that we were taking them away from "home"? Alas, no, for the dingy rooms they lived in hardly deserved the name, and as one baby succeeded another the very space was lacking for the elder children, let alone the games and occupations which would have kept them "out of mother's way". It may seem the bitterest reproach of all against our civilisation, but the fact remains that in the homes of the poor there is no place for the growing children, and that the mothers and fathers, over and over again, came to express to us their gratitude for the shelter and happiness bestowed by the Play Centre. One of us was standing one evening beside the superintendent of the Hoxton Centre when she opened the playground gate to admit the little waiting crowd. A mother pushed forward five little ones —"Here they are, Miss, all five of them"—then, turning to the visitor—"Now I know they're safe for two hours, and perhaps I can do a bit of cleaning and sewing!" Or take the case of two boys, "described to me," writes the superintendent, "as rough and rude, and always in mischief—the worst boys in the neighbourhood. Their mother told me she did not find them troublesome but simply could not keep them indoors, though she knew the influence of the streets was bad for them. It is not easy to keep strong, healthy, active boys in small rooms, with little or nothing to occupy them. I have never found anything wrong with them

except that they needed occupation. They have been to the Centre every night for the past year, and are now monitors—most helpful and capable." Or again, in a more tragic note—"The C's. Three boys and a girl. In this family the father's drunkenness is the cause of the distress. He deserts the family periodically. The mother expressed her gratitude for the protection the Play Centre afforded her children, as she feared the consequences if they were at home with the father while she was at work. She does her best to keep them ignorant of the father's ways."

But indeed such evidence could be multiplied indefinitely, and not least from the mouths of the careful and anxious parents who did try to keep their children "out of the streets" as much as possible. These parents realised that their growing boys and girls needed the recreation and occupation which it was impossible for them to give, in the crowded rooms where every process of life and death had to take place within the few square feet that the London tenement house afforded them; and yet they were most unwilling that their children should roam the streets, with all their dangers, physical and moral. And so when the Play Centre opened near by, they would send the children there rejoicing, and if they were obliged to leave the neighbourhood, "mother" would find a moment to call at the Centre and thank the superintendent for all that she had done for her little ones. "A family of six children came to say good-bye last

Friday to their Play Centre friends. The mother came round later and told me she and the children were sailing for America that evening, but she felt before she went she must come and thank me for the happy times the children had had at the Centre." And again—"Thank God for the Play Centre, Miss, for we know the children are safe. And I'm not the only mother as says so, Miss!"

Thus the Centres grew and flourished, during the seven years between the passing of the "Administrative Provisions Act" in 1907 and the outbreak of the War, their numbers only limited by the limits of the Fund, the numbers of children dealt with increasing almost beyond our power to cope with them. A table of the attendances during these years will show this at a glance:—

PLAY CENTRE ATTENDANCES

1907	418,113.	1911	1,170,962.
1908	619,521.	1912	1,322,936.
1909	738,496.	1913	1,510,381.
1910	933,833.	1914	1,752,173.

When it is remembered that all these attendances were *purely voluntary* and that no pressure was ever exercised upon the children in the form of treats, buns, or oranges to make them attend more regularly, it will be seen that these figures represent merely the fundamental craving for occupation, warmth, and shelter which besets all child-nature. It was no uncommon thing, in the winter of 1912-13,

for our larger Centres to accommodate 900 to 1000 children per evening, and the attendances at all the Centres reached an average of 52,000 per week. To visit, say, the Poplar or Bow Centre on a murky London evening, and to see all the varieties of occupation with which the school building hummed, was a revelation in the results to be obtained from simple care in supervision and the use of good material. To begin with, the discipline was never too tight, though it was always there, for we wished the atmosphere of the Centre to be one of *Play*, not one of *School*, and so long as a child did not interfere with the toys of his neighbour he was encouraged to enjoy his own with the utmost freedom. An important feature of each Centre was the "Quiet Games Room" for both boys and girls, where often as many as sixty children were congregated together. At a new Centre the Games Room was likely at first to be the despair of a worker who had never had charge of such a room before (I remember my own feelings at the Fulham Centre, where I undertook it throughout one winter!), and even experienced workers knew that for the first few weeks at any rate they would need much patience, much tact, and an eye everywhere. For the whole thing was so new to the children; they tired of a game in a few minutes, and wanted to try something else; they had to be taught how to play "Picture Lotto," "Who Knows?" "Happy Families," "Snap," etc. And the boys didn't know how to play draughts, and didn't want to

GYMNASTICS

SINGING GAMES

wait their turn with the bagatelle-board. But go into the Quiet Games Room at one of the older Centres, and notice the difference. The children know what they want to play, and quickly settle down to it, forming their little groups quite naturally and taking their turns as a matter of course. The bigger boys are absorbed in their draughts, quite undisturbed by the cheerful chatter going on all round them, while the voluntary worker in charge will tell you that many of them are now really first-rate players for their age.

Two or even three of the big halls will be in use at the same time for singing games, dancing, drill or gymnastics, and here it is pitiful to see the eagerness of the little bodies glowing through the awkward clothes! Boots and coats are laid aside for the gymnastics, and as few of the boys can afford tennis shoes the usual thing is to see them drilling, jumping, or leaping the "horse" with bare feet, and attaining great proficiency in the use of their apparatus too. Once a week, however, the babies of 4 to 7 are allowed the use of one of the halls (though there is always a Babies' Room as well), and here on the smooth boards they run about to their heart's content with their engines, and horses, and go-carts, making whatever noise best pleases them. The Cobbling and Basket-work Rooms will also be filled with as many children as the instructor can possibly take, while painting, drawing, and plasticine-modelling attract each its small crowd of younger ones, and the objects

produced in the Plasticine Room especially tax the imagination of the visitor. The children eagerly hold them out for inspection and admiration, and when you are just deciding that the model before you must be a loaf of bread on a table its owner will proudly announce, "my baby, in its pram!"—or what is to you quite evidently a tree torn up by the roots will be explained as "a 'orse and cart, Miss"!

In the Woodwork class at the Manual Training Centre across the playground, however, the standard of excellence attained is higher than this. Here the boys are taught by the professional instructor who takes the Day Manual classes, but the whole atmosphere of our classes is freer than that of the day classes; the models used differ from those of the day classes in that they are not from drawings to scale, and moreover the boys are allowed to move about and talk, and the only rule enforced is that when a model is once begun it must be finished. This freedom, however, does not appear to detract at all from the value of the work turned out, and to the untrained eye at least the models produced by the boys—the engines, picture-frames, aeroplanes, railway-stations, bridges, inlaid trays, draught-boards, bagatelle-boards and money-boxes—seem almost professional in their precision. Very often the boys undertake to make toys for the use of the younger children, or to mend those which have become the worse for wear:—

"The Woodwork boys have made a strong cart for the small children," writes one of the superintendents. "It is such a delight to them, and is pulled all over the playground." Or—

"The children this week had in use the wheelbarrow made by the Woodwork boys, and have had great fun riding in it." Or again—

"The Woodwork boys have made many clever models this term. They have also kept the Play Centre toys in repair, have mended our drilling rifles, and made us some bar-bells."

In 1913 we organised (at the Passmore Edwards Settlement) an Exhibition of all these things that the children had made, together with a display of their dancing and physical exercises, and I think that anyone who looked round the crowded stalls could not fail to be struck by the originality and spirit shown by their drawings and models, and by the evident delight that had gone to the making of them. "This little Exhibition," said Mrs. Ward in her opening address, "is the fruit of the free use of natural talent. It looks like a bazaar. In reality every object here is the result of some individual child's loving effort, and scarcely anything is to be sold. Many things here—baskets, drawings, inlaid woodwork, fret-work—the children who made them would never have been induced to part with them unless they were sure of getting them back. They have been laboriously paid for—the raw materials only—by farthings at a time, and the children have themselves seen

to it that the mark 'sold' was firmly placed upon them before they were sent here. There is an inlaid tray among the woodwork. It took a boy six months to make, he has paid for the wood, and it was with considerable unwillingness that he even sent it here to show. Let me draw your attention to the beautiful little model of a railway station made by a Poplar boy, to the elaborate shop contrived by a number of boys together, to the beautiful bagatelle-boards, the largest of which —the work of twenty boys—has been in use since Christmas by the Centre for which it was made—to the toys made out of the simplest materials, match-boxes, knitting-pins, reels—to the large show of rugs, to the ingenious models in plasticine, coloured and uncoloured. Then there are the neatly framed drawings which are going to make the brightness of many a tenement room. We don't at all vouch for the taste of everything, though we try to guide it. The children do what they want to do, and they would not come if they didn't."

This Exhibition was made the occasion not only for an appeal for funds, but also for an important statement of policy by the speakers at the opening meeting. In the preceding six years the cost of the centres had risen as follows, in consequence of the rise in numbers:—

1907	£2339.	1910	£3718.
1908	£3042.	1911	£4501.
1909	£3095.	1912	£5403.

We alone knew at what a heavy cost in brain-

IN POSITION FOR GROUND HANDBALL

COBBLING CLASS

fatigue and strain Mrs. Ward had been able to raise such increasingly large sums, but it was not these considerations that weighed with her in making her appeal to the authorities, both national and municipal, to recognise and gradually to take over the work. It was her firm belief that the very success of the Play Centre experiment had demonstrated the need for a more universal system, and with that end in view she had invited Mr. (now Sir) Cyril Cobb, Chairman of the London County Council, to preside at this meeting, and Lord Haldane (then Lord Chancellor) to make the principal speech. She herself made no secret of her aims in her opening remarks. "What we ask of the Lord Chancellor," she said, "is some systematic and adequate provision through Parliament and through the Local Authorities for these after-school hours, during which at present the great educational plant of the nation, its school buildings and playgrounds, are lying empty and unused. Such an effort as ours cannot be kept up ultimately without the aid of the Local Authority and the Nation." And in the speech of Lord Haldane—in whom this country will recognise some day, if victory has not made us blind, one of our best and most large-hearted public servants—the same thought emerges, though uttered with the caution that inevitably circumscribes the public man. His words have much force and meaning for us to this day:—

"In this great London of ours," he said, "we have got a large number of children who are very

important people. They are important because in ten, fifteen, or twenty years' time they will be the citizens of the day. What are we going to do to make them good citizens? We send them to school, but there is all that long time between the hours called school hours and the time of going to bed, and those few hours may more than counteract the good effect of the school-time. I remember when I was hunting up Territorials, and organising with a view of getting them, going down and exploring that remarkable field which there is across the river. I found lots of life going on there, but what struck me was this: everybody seemed to be living just on the margin of subsistence—in great poverty; there was no provision for the children; they were out in the streets with nobody to look after them; they were learning everything they ought not to learn, and nothing that they ought to learn. I was struck with the terrible and crushing effect of poverty on these children. Just think how the children of the rich are looked after; every hour of their leisure time is more or less supervised, and they are just as susceptible and amenable to moulding influences, then, as they are while under actual instruction. If they are what they are, it is largely because they are cared for in the hours out of school as in the hours spent in school. The idea of the Play Centre, therefore, is something much more than play. It is to give a chance of getting at and moulding these boys and girls, who are spending their time under the worst influences in the streets, and suggest to them the doing of better things.

People, whether they are young or old, are very largely moved by suggestion, if the suggestion is made in the right way. If you get these boys and girls to come into the playground and playroom, if you suggest to them that they can make themselves better and bigger, and that they can produce and create, they will soon wish to try, and then there is nothing they like so much as to see the effect of their efforts. If that were going on all over this great City, all over the great cities of the country, and adapted, as it would have to be adapted, to the rural districts, do you think that the generation that is going to carry on the destinies of the country within the next twenty years would not be much better than it would be without such influences as these? Your education will never be complete until you train the hand, the eye, and the ear, as well as the brain, until you have directed the moral faculties as well as the mental, and until you have looked after the physical. You may say, 'It is an appalling problem'. It is a very great problem, but I think that 200 years after this, people will look back on this twentieth century, with all its discoveries and wealth, as a barbarous period, because we never thought of the obvious; and the most obvious is that we should take care of the future generation. In those days the public will take care of the future generation as the most important duty of the State, whereas we have not half-wakened up to it to-day. Education does not begin at five; it begins as soon as the child begins to be conscious of its own personality, and that is

very young indeed. For this Play Centre work you have got wonderful material to hand in the playrooms and playgrounds of the Council schools. That is why the Council has taken Mrs. Ward into co-operation with them in this new phase of national work. Now, do not let us think that this is a thing which the State is going to take up thoroughly for a good long while. The State is always very slow to move, and probably it is fortunate that it is so, or otherwise we should be crushed under the burden of its blunders. This movement has been following the natural course. I think that it has reached the stage in which it must be recognised as one, at least, of the elements in a national system of education, as one of the things that must come within the scope and observance of the Board of Education. The Play Centre movement must begin by voluntary effort. It has already reached a stage in which I hope it is going to attract a great deal of official attention."

But in spite of these wise words, the authorities more directly concerned were still reluctant to shoulder the new burden, and for another four years our committee was obliged to bear it unaided. Little more than a year after these words were uttered, the whole fabric of our society reeled from the shock of the outbreak of war, and it seemed as though the Play Centre movement must inevitably share in the general wreck. Events, however, were to prove the contrary, and it was the experience of the war itself that was to give our appeal a new and irresistible force.

CHAPTER IV

Financial Anxiety—Economies—The Centres in War-time—Air-raids—The Centres carry on—The Conversion of the Board of Education—The Board's Memorandum

THOSE who will cast their memory back to the autumn months of 1914, when the Belgian refugees were pouring in, and the Prince of Wales's Fund, the Red Cross Society, and the various regimental and ambulance funds were all competing for our generosity, will readily understand the anxiety that beset the members of the Play Centre Committee lest their work for the children should have to be curtailed. We were at that time responsible for twenty Centres, and the attendances for the autumn term alone amounted to 811,000, while for the whole year they were to touch 1,752,000. Were we to be obliged to close down a certain number of Centres, and to turn into the streets so many hundreds of children who had come to look upon the Play Centre as their natural heritage? It was not to be thought of without the deepest repugnance, but the omens were by no means encouraging; the response to Mrs. Ward's appeal in "The Times" in December only amounted to £330, and we looked forward to the future with much doubt and apprehension.

Yet all the time the actual need of the children for care and supervision after school hours was only increased by the war conditions. Even the first call-up of the Reservists meant that thousands of London homes were left fatherless, and that the wilder spirits among the boys had so much the more liberty to get themselves and others into trouble. And as the call for volunteers went on, and more and more of the fathers and elder brothers joined the colours, this lack of control led to an ever-increasing lawlessness in the back streets. From Fulham the superintendent wrote: "My every-night children include a number of boys whose fathers are at the front, and whose mothers tell me, 'I can do nothing with him since his father went, Miss. I am only too glad *you* can!' Indeed I hardly know which I am most sorry for, the mother or the boy, for often it merely means that the spirit which is so fine in our men in the trenches is in their young sons, but can find no outlet in a three-roomed flat. One knows that what the boy needs is occupation, not constant remonstrance and restraint." Presently, however, under the influence of darkened streets and the lurid excitement of the cinema films, these ardent spirits would band together in gangs, calling themselves the "Black Hand" or "Clutching Hand Gang," would raid the shops and generally spread terror over a whole neighbourhood. If there was a Play Centre in that neighbourhood there was every hope that these companies would be broken up and induced

to spend their energies on military drill, gymnastics, or woodwork, and the testimony of some of our superintendents is remarkable on this point: "My list of every-night boys is growing steadily," writes the superintendent of an East End Centre in the second winter of the war; "I have been able to break up a group of boys calling themselves the 'Clutching Hand Gang'. They are as amenable as possible now." And again, "By getting a hold on a lively leader I have been able to scatter several bands of rough boys. One such leader was so fascinated by the painting class that I won him to the Centre, and ended his mad exploits." But with only twenty Play Centres to the 800,000 children of London we could not hope to exercise more than a local effect in this direction, and our constant fear, during 1915 and 1916, was that our efforts might have to be curtailed instead of extended. Our subscriptions and donations for 1915 amounted to only £4430, as against £6365 for 1914, but by dint of drastic economies both in materials and in the trained teaching we employed it was found possible not only to maintain the twenty existing Centres but even to add another in the slum district of North Kensington. Never was a committee better served than ours by its professional workers, from its three Secretaries and its twenty Superintendents, to the youngest Games Master who took the boys for cricket or football in the playgrounds. The economies devised by the secretaries were largely responsible for enabling us to carry on

through the hard times, and the devotion of the teachers sometimes showed itself in touching offers to come without payment on Saturday mornings, in order that the boys might not lose their cricket or the girls their chance of a quiet hour in the playground with their babies. Gradually we were forced to drop some of the more expensive handwork classes (such as woodwork) and to do without the services of the drill and gymnastic masters, who were all sooner or later called up ; but basketwork and cobbling were still carried on, though on a reduced scale, and the Quiet Games Rooms were increased in number and never lost their attraction. Thus we struggled on through the difficult years 1915 and 1916, until at length the doctrine that *in the children lay the best hope of England* seemed to have penetrated deeply into the public mind, and the response to Mrs. Ward's appeal in "The Times" of December 18, 1916, saved the situation for the Play Centres. Over £1000 came in, and I remember well how my children and I were all drawn into the joyous business of acknowledging the donations, and how my small boy of six shared in the general excitement at the opening of the letters and rejoiced louder than anyone when a £50 cheque tumbled out of the envelope.

No record of work in London during the four winters of the war can fail to call up the sinister memory of the air-raids, and all that they meant to the swarming population of the East and South. The Play Centres felt the full blast of the disturb-

ance that they caused in London's life, although no raid ever took place actually within the Play Centre hours, except the daylight raid of Saturday, July 7, 1917. But whenever a raid had taken place in a particular neighbourhood, the resulting panic would mean that for days afterwards the mothers would drag their children down to the nearest underground shelter as soon as dusk began, and spend the weary hours of the night there in hard discomfort. The Blackwall and Rotherhithe Tunnels must have swarmed with our children on these nights, and too often when the poor huddled families emerged at dawn there would be some among them who found their little homes laid waste and their possessions scattered to the winds. When the system of warnings and "All clear" signals was adopted the conditions improved, for then the time of taking refuge was at least definitely limited, and the responsibilities of our superintendents to some extent lightened. Previously we had had to leave it to their discretion whether to close the Centres or not on any evening that seemed "likely" for a raid, and many an anxious time they had in deciding between the claims of common sense and of the nervous, excitable parents. The following instructions were issued to them during the time before the "warning" system had been adopted :—

I

IMPORTANT

From Mrs. Humphry Ward

PLAY CENTRES OFFICE,
TAVISTOCK PLACE, W.C. 1,
June 8th, 1917.

Mrs. Ward has consulted with Scotland Yard as to the steps to be taken by the Play Centre superintendents in the event of an air-raid during Play Centre hours, when the children are in the playgrounds.

It is possible that the first warning of a raid may be the sound of firing or of explosion. At such warning the children should be at once marched into the school building and kept in the ground-floor hall, *well away from the windows* until it is known that the danger is past. A raid will obviously be of only short duration, and the superintendents and staff will, of course, do their utmost to keep the children calm and under good control.

The same instructions hold good in case of general warning of a raid being given by police or otherwise.

II

Important

From Mrs. Ward

Play Centres Office,
Tavistock Place, W.C. 1,
June 15th, 1917.

To the Play Centre Superintendents :—

Re *Possible Air-raids during Play Centre hours* (*Notice* 2).

It is most desirable

(*a*) that the superintendents should practise some form of Air-raid Drill with the children in the playgrounds.

At a chosen signal, the children should understand that they must line up instantly in a certain part of the playground. This should be practised each evening until the superintendent is satisfied that the signal is clearly understood and *promptly* and *exactly* obeyed by the children.

(*b*) that the children should be told to tell their parents that in the event of a raid while they are at the Play Centre, they will be taken at once into the school, and kept there until the danger is past.

The superintendents should frequently repeat this instruction, and should do their best in other ways to let the parents know this.

III

From Mrs. Humphry Ward

Evening Play Centres

Instructions for Superintendents in case of Lights in the Schools having to be suddenly turned out during Play Centre occupation.

(1) The superintendent must see that every room occupied is provided each evening with a candle, candle-stick and matches. These to be bought from petty cash.

(2) Where the top hall is occupied, the teacher in charge must be responsible for at once marching the children to the second floor hall.

(3) All the children must be kept in the building *in their respective rooms* and halls until police instructions are given.

(4) The superintendent is responsible for letting each member of her staff know of these arrangements.

But, as good luck would have it, none except the above-mentioned daylight raid ever occurred during our hours, although the superintendents and staff were frequently caught on their return from the Centres, and had to spend many weary hours in Tube stations and other improvised shelters.

One disagreeable result of the raids was that we were obliged to spend a large sum out of our

depleted funds in the fitting up of dark blinds in all the school halls and classrooms that we used, for of course no glimmer of light was allowed to show from our windows. But we felt that any sacrifice must be faced in order to save the children from the miseries of those cruelly-darkened streets, for the darkening had, of course, immensely added to the perils and hardships that the children of London had to suffer in the winter evenings. Here is an account by a visitor to an East End Centre in the winter of 1915-16, which well expresses the relief from war-conditions of all sorts that was afforded by the cheerful, well-lighted rooms :—

"Turn from the darkened streets and see the children lining up for admission to a Play Centre on a cold and rainy night. As you grope your way down the dark street, children run in front of and behind you, from side streets to the right and to the left of you—boys and girls, big and little—all making for the friendly school building, which they know will be bright and warm inside, though it shows no light outside in these days of Zeppelins. They chatter happily as they run, and as they pass you they greet you with a friendly 'Mi-ss!'—taking it for granted that you are coming to visit them at 'Play Centre'. In another few minutes the halls are full of dancing and singing children, or of boys delighting in gymnastic or team games, and in the classrooms there is a happy hum as the children paint and draw, knit, sew, cobble their

boots, thread beads, make ingenious toys from match-boxes, reels of cotton, incandescent mantle cases; weave baskets, model guns, aeroplanes, and Red Cross ambulances; build bridges and forts, or in the Toy Rooms find engines and horses to drag about, dolls to nurse and put to bed, tea services for tea parties to which 'Teacher' will come, puzzles to put together, and picture-books to pore over."

The average attendance at our larger Centres was from 600 to 700 children at each session, and at Stepney the number once touched 1114, and was frequently over 900. The thought of what would become of these many hundreds of children in the dark streets if we were obliged to close any one of the Centres—how they would drift about aimlessly until they could be admitted to their homes, or find their way to the nearest cinema with the pennies that a distracted mother had given them to get them out of her way—all this acted as a constant spur to our committee to strain every nerve to keep the Centres open, in spite of the difficulties of rising prices, of dark blinds, and everything else.

And, though we did not yet know it, the State recognition and support for which Mrs. Ward had striven through so many long years was already very near us in the autumn of 1916. The first step was actually taken by the Home Office, from which a letter was addressed to the Board of Education in December, 1916, drawing the Board's attention to the serious increase in juvenile crime which had

RIFLE DRILL

RIFLE DRILL

occurred since the outbreak of war. The Board, then under the Presidency of Mr. J. W. Pease (now Lord Gainford), was already convinced of the necessity of taking vigorous steps to combat the growing evil, and after much friendly consultation with Mrs. Ward, Sir Amherst Selby-Bigge, the Permanent Secretary, was able to draw up and circulate an authoritative Memorandum in which the assistance of the Government was promised for Play Centres throughout the country.

The signing of the Memorandum was one of the first official acts of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, then newly appointed Minister for Education, and soon afterwards he wrote these words to Mrs. Ward: "Nothing has given me greater pleasure, since I took up this work, than the opportunity which it has brought me of giving some help to your Play Centres".

The Memorandum itself, considering its importance in the Play Centre movement, must be quoted here in full:—

Memorandum Accompanying the Regulations for Evening Play Centres for Public Elementary School Children

1. Under the accompanying Regulations the Board will be prepared to pay grants in respect of the maintenance of Evening Play Centres between August 1, 1916, and July 31, 1917, for children attending Public Elementary Schools. The sum

which will be available for these grants is limited, but the Board believe that it will be sufficient to enable them to pay at the rate of 50 per cent of the approved expenditure in cases where they are satisfied as to the adequacy as well as the quality of the work done. It is obvious that the public value of the work done in a given Centre is usually greater when the Centre is open regularly and continuously for a considerable period than when it is open only on a few days in the week and for a short period, and it is equitable that in determining the rate of grant the Board should have regard to this consideration. When, therefore, a Centre is closed before the summer holidays or meets on less than five evenings a week the rate of grant may to some extent be affected.

2. The Board have recently (Circular No. 975) circulated a Letter addressed to them by the Home Office urging that all possible steps should be taken to deal with the problem presented by the serious increase of juvenile offences since the beginning of the war. Many of these offences are committed by children still at school; there is much evidence that, owing to the absence on military service of their fathers, and perhaps even more of their elder brothers, the industrial employment of their mothers, the darkening of the streets, and other circumstances arising out of the war, many school children, and especially boys, are suffering from want of proper care and discipline, and are exposed to serious risk of deterioration. It appears, there-

fore, to the Board that a special occasion has arisen for adopting such measures as are open to the Board and Local Education Authorities for providing by means of Play Centres care and recreation out of school hours for children for whose education they are directly responsible, and especially for those whose home conditions are unfavourable to healthy and happy development. It will of course be realised that every effort should be made to co-ordinate the work of the Play Centres with the activities of the many admirable organisations which already exist for promoting the welfare of older children and of boys and girls who have left school.

3. Under Section 13 (1) of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, Local Education Authorities have power to provide and to assist voluntary associations to provide Play Centres for children attending school. The Board trust that Authorities will lose no time in getting into touch with any voluntary organisations concerned with the welfare of school children in their area, with a view to considering what additional provision is desirable and practicable. It is to be hoped that a number of Authorities will themselves establish and conduct Play Centres, but others may prefer in the first instance to recognise for the purposes of the Act of 1907 the work carried on by voluntary associations, many of which, no doubt, would be able and willing to extend the scope of their work if suitable premises and financial

assistance were available for the purpose. In such cases the Board will be prepared to pay grants under these Regulations to the association, but they would expect the Authority also to assist to the extent at least of placing Elementary School premises at their disposal free of any charge for rent and for heating, lighting, and cleaning. It will be observed that the Board have taken power to disregard any items of expenditure which in their opinion should not be taken into account, and it will only be in exceptional circumstances that they will be prepared to take into account expenditure incurred in respect of the hire or use of premises.

4. Although the immediate occasion of the Board's action in this matter is the need for preventing and remedying deterioration arising out of the war, it is important to remember that a Play Centre should have a positive aim, and that if well and intelligently managed it may be a valuable agency for training the children. For this purpose its value is to be measured not only by its success in keeping the children out of harm's way and mischief, but also by the influence it exercises in the formation of character. This influence must, however, always be exercised through genuine play, and it is greatly to be desired that a spirit of free play, and of self-chosen occupation, should prevail in a Play Centre. All possible encouragement should be given to a child's own ideas and inventions in play, so far, of course, as space and numbers allow. The possibilities of play, indoor as well

as outdoor, are capable of wide development.[1] Where large numbers of children are present, discipline, of course, can never be neglected. The children must be taught scrupulously to obey orders, and to respect the rooms they use and everything in them. At the opening of a Centre the pleasure of the children in a new and exciting experience will often, especially in a poor and crowded district, make discipline difficult. Patience and intelligence are both needed, and when once order has been secured, the superintendent should aim at making the atmosphere and spirit of the Centre, the atmosphere and spirit—as far as can be—of a happy and well-ordered home. Intelligent interest in the individual children, the encouragement of a corporate spirit, especially in the elder children, so that they feel themselves responsible for the welfare of the Centre, and are on the watch to help new-comers, and to hand on the spirit of the place to them—these are what a good superintendent will strive after. The elder children must be led to look after the little ones. The handwork should be done for pleasure, and not in a spirit of competition. Those who have no talent for drawing will still amuse themselves with paint and pencil, while those who have talent should find it encouraged and helped.

In short, while the spirit of the School is one of

[1] Reference in this connection may be made to the Board's Educational Pamphlet No. 27, "The Playground Movement in America and its Relation to Public Education," published in 1913, price 4d. (obtainable through any bookseller).

work, which may, of course, give pleasure, but necessarily implies effort and close attention, the spirit of the Play Centre should be one of relaxation and enjoyment. Real *rest* is often desirable for many children. A superintendent should always be on the look-out for tired children whose only wish is to sit still, to look at a picture book, or play quietly with a toy. School methods and phrases should be avoided in a Play Centre as much as possible. Children will go back to them in school with all the fresher intelligence.

5. Continuity of Play Centre work is most desirable, and a Centre which keeps in touch with the children through the greater part of the year will show better results than a Centre which is open for a few months only. But whatever the period for which the Centre may be open, it is important that during that period, exclusive of the ordinary school holidays, it should meet each night from Monday to Friday. Even though few individual children may be able to attend on more than three evenings a week, the Centre should always be there for the child who is in need of it. Normally a Centre should meet for not less than one and a half hours, but where circumstances render such a course desirable the Board will raise no objection to the meeting being divided into two sessions of not less than one hour each, attended by different sets of children. In such cases, however, any children whose home circumstances prevent their returning home at the end of the first session should be allowed to

remain at the Centre for the second session. It may also be found desirable to have boys on one night and girls on another, but where a Centre is so organised a room should be set apart for those girls or boys, as the case may be, who otherwise would be obliged to spend their time in the streets. The hours of opening and closing will depend upon the social conditions and customs of the neighbourhood, but generally the most suitable time will be during the hours between 5 and 7.30 or 8 o'clock.

6. The success of a Centre largely depends upon the superintendent. Experience in the management of children and a good knowledge of the conditions of life in the homes of the type of child who may be expected to attend are important qualifications for the post. A sense of humour will be specially useful in dealing with the kind of difficulties which are likely to arise. A superintendent should get into close touch not only with the head teachers of neighbouring schools and the representatives of boys' and girls' clubs and similar organisations, but also with Care Committees, as it must be remembered that the eligibility of a child for admission to a Centre should primarily be its need, and not its good behaviour.

7. Care will, of course, be needed in the selection of the assistant members of the staff. It does not follow that the best Day School teacher will be the best Play Centre worker. Any person who is in sympathy with the children and able to enter into the spirit of their games and occupations

will have comparatively little trouble as regards discipline. In large Centres which are open every night a nucleus of paid workers is likely to be found necessary, but the Board hope that a considerable number of persons who are interested in the welfare of children may, notwithstanding the numerous calls upon their time, come forward to assist as voluntary workers. In many cases it may be possible to enlist the help of University or Training College students, some of the older girls from secondary schools, and individual members of boys' and girls' clubs.

8. The Board do not think it necessary to lay down rules for the accommodation of rooms in a Play Centre and for limiting the number of children in a class. As regards both of these matters, much depends on the nature of the occupations, the shape and furnishing of the room, and the ingenuity of the superintendent and workers. But the Board will expect care to be taken that no room is inconveniently crowded, and that no worker is overburdened.

9. Organisation will be facilitated in the larger Centres if a time-table of occupations is drawn out at the beginning of the year. In the light of experience it may be desirable to recast it, but temporary modifications should be avoided so far as possible, in order that the children may know what to expect on any evening, and at the assembly of the Centre may group themselves according to the occupation in which they desire

to take part. In small Centres less elaborate organisation will be possible, and the superintendent will often be able to vary the evening's programme to meet the needs and desires of the children.

10. The choice of occupations will be largely determined by the bent and capacity not only of the helper but of the children, and a wide discretion may properly be exercised in meeting the varying needs of each Centre. Amongst others the following occupations may be found suitable :—

Physical exercises, gymnastics.
Organised games or boxing for boys.
Music, dancing and singing (including singing games).
Charades.
Cobbling.
Cooking for boys.
Toy-making.
Needlework and knitting.
Doll dressing.
Books and games.
Story-telling.
Drawing and painting.
Plasticine for smaller children.
Toy-room for smaller children.
"Playing at shop" and "keeping house."

Many others will doubtless suggest themselves.

Carpentry and other crafts may be introduced with great advantage where the necessary facilities exist. It is understood that in London, manual

training rooms have been used in connection with Play Centres with excellent results.

On Saturdays and during the summer months, playgrounds and open spaces should be used as much as possible, and the occupations will be varied accordingly.

11. The necessary Forms on which application may be made for the recognition of a Centre under the Regulations may be obtained from the Board of Education, Whitehall, London, S.W.

The rejoicing in our Committee when the Government's decision became known to us may well be imagined. The little venture launched at Marchmont Hall so many years before had at last come safe into port, and although Mrs. Ward was by no means absolved from her responsibilities, either in finance or in organisation, she could feel that the Play Centre movement had at length been adopted by the State, and that its future was definitely assured.

CHAPTER V

The London Centres after the Grant—Expansion to Present Numbers—Large Increase in Cost—Change to One-session Time-table—Old and New Centres—Italian Centres—Jewish Free School—People's Palace—The London County Council comes into Line

BEFORE leaving the subject of the London Play Centres it may be well to follow their fortunes during the two years that have elapsed since the first payment of the Government Grant, to note the rapid increase that has taken place in their numbers, and to cast a glance at certain individual Centres whose history presents features of some special interest.

On January 1, 1917, we had only nineteen Centres in actual existence, since two of our twenty-one—those at Woolwich and the Isle of Dogs—had had to be closed in the previous autumn, owing partly to financial difficulties and partly to special war-conditions in the districts concerned. The remoteness and inaccessibility of the Isle of Dogs made it a specially difficult Centre to staff when the goings and comings of the teachers might be interrupted at any moment by a raid. So we reluctantly came to this decision, but as soon as we were informed of the intentions of the Board of Education (in January, 1917) we felt that we

might respond to some of the many appeals that were still reaching us for the starting of new Centres. Accordingly, six new Centres were opened in the course of 1917; two more in the first quarter of 1918, and four more again in the "school year" running from 1 April, 1918, to 31 March, 1919—which is now to be the official Play Centre year. Meanwhile the original "Recreation School" at the Passmore Edwards Settlement—the activities of which had never diminished throughout these twenty years—ceased to be organised on a separate basis and came under the Play Centres Committee, thus bringing the total of our London Centres up to *thirty-two*. This is where the figure now stands, but Mrs. Ward has never disguised her belief that London needs some 200 Centres, one to every four Council Schools, before the demand of the children can be regarded as adequately met.

Up to now, however, it has been impossible to extend them at a more lavish rate than this, for the sum of money to be raised by annual subscription is still very considerable, while the cost of the Centres has risen on an average by 50 per cent. Even with all the economies practised by our superintendents—and Heaven knows from what unpromising materials they have devised new occupations for the children!—the price of all our stock-in-trade, our paper and paints, our cane, our needlework materials, our plasticine, leather and toys, has leapt up so prodigiously that the average cost of the Centres now is quite £375, instead of

£275 as in 1914. The salaries of our staff have also been raised to meet the additional cost of living, while another cause of the increase lies in the fact that from the autumn of 1916 onwards we decided to adopt a *one-session* instead of a *two-session* time-table. This measure was another result of the raids, for the police advised us that it was undesirable for the second set of children to line up and wait for admission in the unprotected street, before the first set came out. The immediate effect of this step was of course a large and regrettable drop in our numbers, since we could not at that time afford the additional staff with which to open a larger number of classrooms; but in other ways the system had its advantages. Each child remained for nearly two hours, changing its occupation at half-time instead of for the one hour of the "two-session" time-table, and so came under the influence of the Centre more thoroughly and continuously. It was a plan that we had already adopted in some of our more "difficult" neighbourhoods, and now that the Government Grant has once more enabled us to enlist a larger band of helpers it is doubtful whether we shall revert to the two-session time-table. The latter enables a larger number of children to be entertained for a smaller outlay (since the same group of helpers remains on for the second session), but if an increase in the staff can be afforded and the same children kept throughout, there is no doubt that the effect on them is more far-reaching. In consulting our Table of Attendances, therefore, the reader should

bear in mind that although we are now only just getting back to the attendances for 1914, still each attendance represents almost twice the duration of Play Centre time for each child.

One of the Centres that we were enabled to open in 1917 as a result of the Government Grant was in a remote and isolated peninsula jutting out into the river amid a wilderness of docks, approached only by a single long lane from the mainland and surrounded on three sides by water. A clergyman in charge of a mission-room in the Island (as we will call this place) had appealed to us to open a Centre there, speaking of it in the following terms :—

"This is a small place, entirely cut off by the river, with only one approach to it—a long road called the Wall. There is nothing for the children to do, the houses are too small to live in and have hardly any yards, and there is only the street for play. Consequently the temptation to get into mischief in the factories and factory yards is great. There is a great deal of stealing owing to this, and gambling."

Investigations were made in the Island, and we decided to open a Centre there at once, while one of our most experienced workers pluckily undertook the superintendentship. There were only about 160 children on the roll of the solitary school, but they practically all came to the Centre, and our superintendent soon found that she had her work cut out for her in dealing with them!

"The boys here are the most difficult I have

ever had to deal with," she wrote after a few weeks' experience. "At the same time they are intensely interesting because of this difficulty. Many of them seem to be veritable young sea-pirates—constantly down at the water's edge, seeking what they may devour."

And it was not only the boys but the parents themselves who tried to make Miss C.'s life a burden to her in the first few months of their acquaintance. Her only punishment for disobedience or insolence among the boys was to expel the culprits from the Centre for one or two nights, but they already loved their games there so much that this was resented as an intolerable hardship. Often as Miss C. went home during that first winter she was waylaid by a small crowd of angry and shouting parents, blindly taking their boys' part and threatening Miss C. with all manner of bodily injuries. But she never flinched in her behaviour towards them, and though it took her a long up-hill fight she mastered them at length, and has now, after two years, got them to understand that the only way to have happiness in the Centre is to have obedience and order there too. By this time she has become acquainted with nearly all the families in the single street, wedged in between the big sugar refineries and the back-water that creeps round the edge of the peninsula; they are all related and inter-married, only three main branches being distinguishable amongst them, and their children wander into each other's houses at will or get lost by the water's edge for hours

without any notice being taken. When a football flies over the playground wall into the river the boys are stripped and after it in a second. If the tide is high they swim for it, if low they wade deep into the oozy mud. Many tricks they have with the cargoes of barges and in-coming ships, often succeeding in setting a box or a bale floating that they know the tide will bear round to their back-water after dark, and bold would be the ware-houseman that would come round and claim it. One day Miss C. heard that some of the big boys had carried off a bundle of sacks from the principal factory. "Aren't you going to go and get them back?" she asked of the overseer. "Not me," he replied, with a grin. "Well then, *I* will," she declared, and came back half an hour later with a crest-fallen procession of boys carrying the sacks. What magic had she used? Merely the announcement that she could not have those boys at the Centre until the sacks were taken back, and they, knowing that Miss C. meant what she said, had capitulated at once. But her scruples must have seemed strange to them, for nearly all their front passages are carpeted with these sacks, "pinched" by their parents from the factories!

"It is this free, wild, erratic life that makes these children so difficult to deal with," writes Miss C. in an interesting account of them. "I have been told that many organisations have been started for the good of the Island people, but they have all been given up. At the boys' club everything was smashed to pieces. I always feel that the

school hours are just about as much as the children can stand. They are then like wild animals let out of a cage. They do not care for the quiet *sitting* occupations of a Play Centre. They want space—no end of space—and vigorous games. One cannot judge them from too hard a standpoint. They have plenty of fine qualities, such as pluck and fearlessness. They will defend their friend through thick and thin, and think it far more honourable to defend an evildoer than to give him up to justice. The children will steal freely from the barges and factories, but if a boy steals from the Play Centre they will have him up before me even before I can detect the theft. When anyone is in need they are ready to give, and they have given freely in the Great War. Several have given us their lives."

Only a hundred and sixty little souls down there in the Island, but what a romance, what an epitome of England's free, roving sea-life! To them the Play Centre has come as the first embodiment, after their Day School, of Law, of *civilitas;* not to check their spirit, but to straighten and strengthen it, and their growing devotion to their Mentor—to the "Miss" who comes to them so regularly from the big world outside—is the best proof that they stood in need of it.

So much for one of the latest of our London Play Centres, but I cannot close this brief account of them without reverting once more to the parent of them all—the Children's Recreation School at the Passmore Edwards Settlement. Here the

evening occupations described in my first chapter have developed into a system of organised play which still remains the model, to my thinking, for all subsequent efforts. In the winter months there is a roll of some 900 individual children, with a weekly attendance of about 2000; and in the summer the children are allowed to use the big, tree-shaded garden at the back of the building, where the "little mothers" can have rest while their babies sleep or play in the swing-cots under the trees, and other groups sit about on coloured blankets playing quiet games. Up to three years ago the children used this garden for all the usual "playground occupations," including cricket, basket-ball, and rounders, but the joyful noise that they made over these games became too much for the back windows of Tavistock Square, which overlook the garden, and our landlord and constant friend, the Duke of Bedford, was assailed with complaints. So he was obliged to give way, and now the stillness of the very best behaviour reigns in the garden, while the boisterous games are relegated to the small gravelled playground that lies between the Settlement and the Invalid Children's School next door.

The following account of the Recreation School, written by its superintendent, Miss Eleanor Taubman, will, I feel sure, be of interest to my readers :—

"Many children have joined the Recreation School (better known in the neighbourhood by the children as 'Passmore's') at the early age of a fortnight or three weeks old. They are some-

times introduced by their mothers, who take them to the Women's Meeting—the mothers, in some instances, having been old Club girls or associates, From there the older children bring them to the Recreation School, especially in the summer, when the babies can sleep undisturbed in their 'prams' under the trees in the Settlement garden, while the elder ones are free to play quiet games near them, or running about games in the playground. They can come also on Saturday mornings all through the winter, a very useful time for the mothers to get rid of them, while the generally very cramped home is set in order.

"The Recreation School is open to boys and girls up to the age when they leave school and go to work, and then they are invited to join the Boys' and Girls' Clubs.

"The superintendent of the Recreation School is a member of a Care Committee connected with some of the nearest L.C.C. schools. She finds great help from this, hearing as she does of cases of distress through poverty or through unhappy homes, and also cases of illness, with the school doctor's reports and recommendations. She can visit these cases, and try to induce those who do not know of the Recreation School to send their children, and so put some natural pleasure into their lives.

"Out of sad or depressing surroundings, such children come into the brightly lighted rooms with good fires burning, where toys abound for those who like them, where there is dancing, drill, and music, and everywhere a sense of gaiety and

'busyness,' of friends meeting and going off in little bands to classes together, and spending a happy time generally.

"The superintendent also can make friends with the mothers of those children she gets to know well; she can find out the individual tastes of such children, and put them into the classes most congenial to them. She learns to understand why a child prefers always to sit in a corner by the fire with a book rather than go to physical exercises. She hears of a child with heart trouble who is in the dancing class, which the doctor says is bad for her, but which she cannot be induced to leave, the mother not 'having the heart to stop her!' The superintendent, of course, soon sets the matter right. In medical work especially has the superintendent, who is also a Care Committee member and visitor, found 'Passmore's' a very useful asset. Many times have angry mothers been appeased when they are told the visitor knows their children through the Settlement, and quite often medical treatment is discussed most amicably in consequence, and, what is better, carried out.

"A master in one of the L.C.C. Schools, who takes classes at the Recreation School, reported that the boys' behaviour and conduct in school had been remarked upon as being greatly improved during the last few years, and the masters generally had agreed that a great part of it was undoubtedly due to the Recreation School. This same master also said he had been very grateful for the knowledge he had gained, through mixing with the boys in their play-time as well as in their school time.

"A Manual Training master having an evening class under the Recreation School reported that he found, in consequence of the eagerness to join the evening class, a very marked improvement in work and behaviour in his day classes, and he felt pleasure himself in the added friendliness of the boys.

"At the present time three L.C.C. teachers besides other helpers are taking voluntary classes in the Recreation School. A short time ago a teacher of a Church School near visited the Recreation School, having heard so much about it from her pupils. She saw several of them in different classes on the evening of her visit, and came across a little party of them in the Library, busily copying poetry out of books, which they intended learning and reciting to her in school. This teacher also said that her school was much indebted to the Recreation School for many pretty dances which children attending had introduced.

"Yet another master, also of a Church School near, reported that he excused all homework if they could sign that they had attended 'Passmore's' the evening before. The knowledge that they had been there under proper control instead of running about the streets he considered justified this.

"Last year's session began on September 1 and ended on July 18. The classes during the autumn and winter terms were as follows: Senior and Junior Girls' Drill, Junior Boys' Drill and Games, Senior and Junior Dramatic, Dancing, Gymnastic, Cardboard Modelling, Cobbling, Cookery, Painting, Clay Modelling, Manual Training, Basket-work, Needlework, a Games'

Room for big boys, one for smaller boys and girls, and a Playroom for little ones between the ages of four and eight. Additional classes taken by voluntary helpers, many of whom came regularly all through the winter and spring months, included needlework, rafia-work, fairy-stories, a regular every-night Games' Room for big girls, and a Lending Library. All these classes were much appreciated by the children. The average weekly attendance for these months was 1944.

"The spring and summer months were spent out of doors when fine. For girls and little ones there was the Settlement garden for quiet games and occupations, such as sewing, knitting, painting, and reading; or the playground for running about games, with toys and sand-pit for the little ones. Cricket or football for big boys under a master was held in the Council School playground near by every evening and Saturday morning. The weekly average attendance for these months was 1203."

The total cost of the Children's Recreation School has never exceeded £280, even in the year of its highest attendances (1914); in 1916 it was brought down by various economies to £180. These figures, however, do not include any charges for rent, cleaning, lighting, and heating, which have been borne by the Passmore Edwards Settlement.

PLAY CENTRES NOT UNDER THE EVENING PLAY CENTRES COMMITTEE

1. Centres for Italian Children

Owing to the energy of the Dante Alighieri Society (15 Greek Street, Soho) there are now five

Play Centres for children of Italian parents in various parts of London, the following Council schools being used:—

The Pulteney School, Soho (Founded 1913).
Everington Street School, Hammersmith (Founded 1914).
White Lion Street School, Islington.
Walnut Tree Walk School, Kennington.
Portobello Road School, Notting Hill (all Founded 1919).

The governing idea of these Play Centres is, I believe, to keep alive in the minds of these little exiles (who would naturally speak English amongst themselves) the knowledge and love of their mother-country, and it is both pretty and moving to hear these baby voices hymning the beauties of *Italia*, whose soil many of them have never trodden. Italian is the language used at the Centres, and the clever superintendent of one of them told me that the children always pick it up within a week, even if they have spoken English constantly before. Their accent certainly seems perfect to an English ear, and it is almost uncanny to hear them relapsing into English amongst themselves as they go out into the street. For the rest, all the usual games and handwork occupations are in use at these Play Centres, which have earned the full grant of the Board of Education. The attendance at the two older Centres (Soho and Hammersmith) has been about 250 per evening between the two schools, and the cost £520; the other two have been founded so recently that no figures are yet available. The

Centres are all open on five evenings a week. The energetic President of the Dante Alighieri Society, Commendatore Canziani, has been mainly instrumental in raising the money for the maintenance of these Centres, and we cannot help congratulating him on the public spirit which has inspired the enterprise.

The Jews' Free School Play Centre

The magnificent buildings of the Jews' Free School, in Middlesex Street, just beyond Liverpool Street station, have been used for the last ten years as the scene of a highly organised Play Centre, open for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours every evening to the children attending the school. A large variety of occupations are provided, including even a brass band and a violin class, while in the fine gymnasium at the top of the building some very advanced gymnastic work on the part of the bigger boys may be seen. Like the Italian Centres, this Jewish Play Centre is not without its national element, for a regular part of these $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours is devoted to the teaching of Hebrew, though of course as an entirely voluntary subject. A boy of twelve may be detailed to take the visitor to the nearest underground station, and it is with feelings akin to awe that one learns that this youthful guide has been studying Hebrew since he was six! No grant is claimed for these lessons, since they do not come within the Board's definition of Play Centre occupations, but the very able superintendent of the Centre informed me that a great many of his boys would be learning Hebrew in any case in stuffy tenement houses, so that it

was thought far more desirable to gather them into this great, airy building, where they might immediately pass from the Hebrew class to open-air games in summer or handwork occupations in winter. The attendances at this Centre are very considerable, amounting some years ago to an average of over 600 boys and 300 girls every evening; but with the movement of population towards the suburbs the congestion in this central area has declined, and the average attendance to-day stands at 425 boys and 195 girls. A remarkable feature of the attendances is that they are as high in summer as in winter, whereas in the Centres under our Committee the summer figures always show a decline. During a typical year the total attendances at the Jewish Free School Play Centre amounted to 126,120 boys and 44,140 girls, while the total cost was £546.

The People's Palace Play Centre

In 1909 the Governors of the People's Palace, Mile End Road, entered into consultation with our Committee and shortly afterwards opened a well-equipped Play Centre at that great institution. One of our best superintendents went to take over the new Centre, at the invitation of the Governors, and since then we believe that the Centre has grown and flourished and brought happiness to the lives of thousands of the child population of Stepney. The attendances are almost as large as those of the last-mentioned Centre (the Jews' Free School), amounting in the winter months to 2358 per week;

but in the summer months boys only are admitted, and the attendance drops to 651. The cost for the last financial year (1918-19) amounted to £410.

The Governors have not so far accepted any grant from the Board of Education, preferring to run their Play Centre upon quite independent lines.

Thus the Play Centre experiment in London has thriven and struck deep root among the child population of our greatest city, and it remains only to record the final acceptance by the London County Council of a more definite share in the responsibilities of the venture. The relations of our committee—and especially of its Chairman, Mrs. Ward, with the L.C.C. in the person of Sir Robert Blair, the well-known Education Officer of the Council, had for fifteen years been most intimate and cordial; but it had seemed to some of us that the time was long in coming when London's Parliament would shoulder its full share of a burden that was growing too great for a single committee to bear. The cost of our thirty-two Play Centres during the last financial year (1918-19) amounted to £12,000, and although the Board of Education paid half, the raising of the balance was still an enormous strain on Mrs. Ward's resources. Moreover, the great towns all over England—Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, and nearly fifty more—had led the way by establishing Play Centres of their own, with the help of the Board of Education grant, and it seemed as if London's Education Authority were in danger of being left behind. Fortunately, however, the

situation was realised in time by the Central Care Committee, and a resolution was passed by that body in May of this year, recommending that the Council should undertake the payment of half the cost of the Play Centres. This was finally accepted by the full Council, and means in practice that the London County Council pays one quarter of the whole, while the Board of Education's half is divided between the Council and our committee. The status of the "voluntary associations" is fully recognised and the administration of the Centres left in their hands, but London admits at last that the play-time of her children is her own direct concern.

If, therefore, the numbers of London's Play Centres were to remain at 32 (or 39, including the independent Centres just described) the sum to be raised annually by voluntary subscription would be a manageable one, and we might look forward to a quiet future. But the children passing through our Centres during the year amount to barely 32,000, out of a total school population of 800,000. Voluntary effort can perhaps succeed in doubling this number, but when it comes to six times, eight times, and ten times the present figures? And nothing less than this will enable us to say that London is "covered". Surely the irresistible conclusion is that eventually the whole of this charge must be shared between the local and the national Exchequers, while the experience gained by the Play Centres Committee might still be made use of in the administration of the Centres. At some not far distant date, therefore, we look forward to

the taking of another step in advance by the London County Council; but in the meantime our appeal must still go forth to those who would seize this chance of assisting a new and growing movement while they still may. For every pound given by the public, another £3 is now added out of public funds, *but the initiative remains with the voluntary subscriber*, for if he or she does not come forward in increasing numbers the Centres will remain where they are now. No greater incentive to public generosity could, I think, be imagined than this, and our committee confidently hopes for a large increase in our voluntary subscriptions, and therefore in the number of our Centres.

But we of the younger generation may be forgiven if we hope also for an easing of the burden borne for so long by one indomitable personality, whose years are now approaching the psalmist's limit, and whose health has never been equal to the strain placed upon it. Mrs. Ward's work for the children of London has been recognised in the manner which she herself has most ardently desired, by the adoption of the Play Centre movement through the length and breadth of England, but it still remains for London, the home of the experiment, to accept its full share both of the burden and the reward. Within two years, shall we prophesy, the trustees of London's Government will have shouldered the task, and will see to it that eventually no London child who is in need of care and shelter—nay in need of *happiness*—shall be suffered to go without it.

CHAPTER VI

The Play Centre Movement in the Great Provincial Towns

ONE of the most interesting sides of our work at the Play Centre office during the last few years has been the answering of enquiries which have reached us from every part of the country as to the organisation and working of Play Centres. Before the announcement of the Board of Education Grant (Jan. 1917) such enquiries emanated almost solely from voluntary committees or private individuals, for no Local Education Authority except Bradford[1] took advantage of the permissive Act of 1907; but even so two Play Centres were opened in Edinburgh in 1912 (by the Edinburgh Play Centre Society), and one in Bristol by the University Settlement in 1915, while Lord Iveagh had been so much impressed with the results of the London movement that he opened, in 1909, a Play Centre in Dublin, in premises specially built for the purpose, and imported one of our ablest superintendents to conduct it. This Centre, ten years after its opening, still flourishes exceedingly. Yet in general one cannot fail to be struck by the lack of initiative shown by most of the great towns in this respect; playgrounds and organised

[1] The Bradford Education Committee opened a small Play Centre at Otley Road School in October, 1916, before the advent of the Government Grant.

games in the parks have been conducted by a great many, but indoor recreation for the children in the winter evenings was, until 1917, left severely alone. "In view of the success which has invariably attended properly organised Evening Play Centres," writes Dr. Janet Campbell in her Report to the Carnegie Trust on Play Centres and Playgrounds (1917), "it is surprising to find so few actually in existence, and also that Education Authorities have neither given more positive encouragement to the voluntary workers nor undertaken the establishment of the Play Centres themselves. It is true that the use of school buildings has been granted for this purpose, but the main obstacle in the way of the formation of Play Centres by voluntary societies has been the difficulty of raising the necessary funds."

After the Circular issued by the Board of Education, however, the situation was completely changed. The number of enquiries that reached our office in the year 1917 enormously exceeded those of any previous year, and proceeded in the majority of cases from Local Education Authorities rather than from voluntary committees. These latter, however, have by no means disappeared even yet, and recently we have received from Jamaica on the one hand and from Ahmedabad in India on the other, requests for advice in the establishment of Play Centres! The Play Centre Committee found it advisable to draw up three leaflets, "The Starting of a Play Centre," "The Cost of a Play Centre," and "Instructions to Superintendents," which may still be obtained from the office at the Passmore

Edwards Settlement and which have found their way into the pigeon-holes of a great many Education Committees. It has also been a sincere pleasure to Mrs. Ward and to our secretaries to be able to show the actual work of the London Play Centres to an increasing number of visitors, and to feel that the living spectacle of the children's happiness has had some effect in clinching the resolution of these hard-working members of Child Welfare Committees, Education Committees, and the like. But, whatever the cause, now in the summer of 1919 it is a fact that no less than 47 Local Education Authorities have adopted the suggestion of the Board of Education, and have between them opened 167 Play Centres.[1] From the great manufacturing towns of the North—Newcastle, Sunderland, Darlington, Liverpool, and Manchester—the list goes down to Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Southampton, while Birmingham and the Midlands are well represented, no less than the Eastern Counties. By the courtesy of the Directors of Education in a number of representative cities I have been able to obtain authentic reports of the progress of their Play Centres during these first two years, and my only regret is that space prevents me from printing the whole of their reports, or from mentioning in detail the work of all the Local Authorities. Taking, however, almost at random, a selection of eight great cities, it is remarkable to find how unanimous their verdict is on the good results already obtained from the first year's or the

[1] See list at end of this chapter.

first two years' experiment. Here is their own account of the matter, taken from the reports so generously sent to me by the Directors of Education :—

1. Manchester

The Manchester Education Committee established seven Play Centres in September, 1917, most of which were open on five evenings in the week, from 6.30 to 8 p.m. The number has now risen to eleven, while four more are contemplated for this autumn (1919), and eventually it is hoped to raise the number to thirty-two. The eleven existing Centres have a roll of about 8000 children, with an average daily attendance of 2446, and the total cost during the last year's working was £4340, representing an average of about £400 per Centre. The children eligible for admission are at present limited to those over ten years of age, but children of nine will probably be admitted this winter. The Director also suggests that "one or two Centres for children between five and nine years of age might eventually be opened in the earlier part of the evening and be tried as an experiment in certain parts of the city". "In most of the Centres," continues the Director, "the children have not been encouraged to attend every night in the week mainly owing to the lack of accommodation : two evenings are reserved for juniors (ten to twelve years of age) and three evenings for seniors (twelve to fourteen years of age). Exceptions are made in the case of 'juniors' or 'seniors' unable to attend on their

respective evenings, nor is the arrangement so strictly adhered to as was necessary at the beginning. Indeed, in one of these Centres, approximately forty boys have never missed attending since it was opened."

It is a common sight when visiting the Centres to find a group of boys and girls waiting at the door but unable to gain admission either because they are below the age of ten years, or because the Centre is full. Sometimes a mother sends her girl with the baby and then goes off herself to see friends or to the Pictures. At first, the girl was allowed in and the baby too, but the practice grew, and it was found necessary to make a stand against it for the sake of the other children.

The Attitude of the Parents

Parents have visited the Centres to enquire if their boys were attending. "He tells me that he comes several evenings per week, but I can hardly believe it," they say in effect. But in every case they have found the boy happy in his play or occupation. In one or two cases they have been so impressed by the value of the Centre that they have offered to become voluntary workers, and are now enrolled on the staff.

Other parents have made gifts of toys and small prizes to the Centres, and the general attitude of mothers and fathers appears to be one of gratitude that such provision is made for the recreation of their boys and girls. Their main criticism is that the younger ones of school age are not allowed to attend.

The Director pays a tribute to the regularity and efficiency of the Voluntary Helpers, who form about one-third of the whole staff.

"The number of voluntary workers," he says, "has varied from 40 to 50 and their attendances each week from 70 to 85, the average being 76. It is worth noting that their attendance has proved so reliable and steady, and it speaks highly for their devoted services and keen interest in the movement.

"In addition to the above, former scholars at the schools where the Centres are held have acted as stewards, and assisted in registration, oversight of various quiet occupations, etc."

Then follows a detailed account of the occupations pursued at the various Centres—a very full and varied programme, including practically everything likely to be attractive to small hands and eager brains. Since most of these occupations have, however, been mentioned in dealing with the London Centres we need not repeat them here, save to mention a few original departures which seem to us highly suggestive, e.g.:—

"(1) Repairs to household things, such as chairs, clocks, kettles, pans.

"(Instruction is also given in handyman repairs such as tap washers, sash cords.)

"Where there is no Manual Room an ordinary classroom is utilised, the boys being provided with a few simple tools.

"(2) Passe-partout picture-framing.

"Picture post cards and photographs are framed and go to decorate the homes.

"(3) Needlework.

"One Centre makes a feature of the making and mending of garments, and the parents have several times shown their appreciation of the value of such help. *At another Centre the children are taught to make bright collars and other decorative trifles on condition that they wear them at the Centre.* The material is mostly given by helpers and friends.

"(4) Week-end excursions. (This is, of course, during the summer only.)

"A small week-end camp has been started near Pott Shrigley as a branch of the Centres' activities. A barn with boarded floor has been secured at Birchencliff Farm, and accommodates 30 to 36 boys or girls. There is also a covered shed in which there might be a certain amount of play in wet weather. The children provide their own food, and prepare their meals. The place is reached by car from Manchester to Hazel Grove, at a cost of 9d. for the return journey for children under 14 years of age. A walk of 4 to 5 miles to the Camp follows. The parties usually leave Manchester on Friday evening and return on Sunday afternoon.

"Each Centre is to have the use of the Camp for at least one week-end during the summer.

"The staffs of the Centres have kindly volunteered their services to run the Camp this year as an experiment.

"If the Camp proves as successful as it promises to be, it is suggested that additional Camps should be arranged in other parts of the country round the city in subsequent years.

"Camps on a larger scale might eventually be organised for boys and girls during the spring and summer holidays, etc. As, however, the children would provide the cost of their own food, the expense of running such Camps would not be likely to prove a serious matter."

Some of the children at these Manchester Centres remind us of our London types :—

"A number of cases could be cited," writes the Director, "of rough boys who joined the Centres 'for a lark'; left after finding that a certain amount of respect for the comfort of the other children was required, and afterwards rejoined and became interested members and useful stewards. One superintendent mentions that several boys in the Centre, and girls too, are, to put it mildly, 'well-known in the district'. He prepared a list of them and gathered them in one or two at a time. The Centre is gradually absorbing them and they seem to have caused little trouble. Like the other members they became interested in the varied games and occupations : they were too busy to have time for mischief."

Finally, the Director sums up the effect of the Centres on the children under various headings, from which I select the following :—

"*A. The Spirit of the Centre*

"At the outset an endeavour was made, as suggested in the Board's circular 960, to reproduce in the Centres 'the atmosphere and spirit of a happy and well-ordered home',

"With this end in view, the children have been allowed as much individual freedom as possible, with due regard to the freedom and comfort of others.

"A child is allowed to enter at any time during the evening session, though in practice it is found that the majority of the children attend much earlier than the stated time (6.30 to 8 p.m.). Some, however, are detained at home to help, or have to wait until the mother returns from her day's work, while others go errands, etc.

"Once in the Centre, the boys and girls are allowed to take up any occupation or join in any game they choose, and, further, they may change at any time to another room. At first many of them were so excited that they did not quite know how to make the best use of this new and unaccustomed liberty in a school building. They changed frequently, and had no sooner begun one thing than they imagined something else would be more interesting. But this feeling gradually wore off; the children discovered what they liked best; and later it was found somewhat unusual for more than a few to change except when a general move took place—usually half-way through the evening, i.e., at 7.15 p.m.

"The only case in which this liberty was curtailed was in the Folk Dancing Class. Here it was found that, in order to make any real progress at all, the attendance must be more or less regular, and so after the first week or two only those who gave in their names were allowed to take part.

"The children now are so keenly interested in

their self-chosen occupations and games that often the difficulty is to convince them that it is time for the Centre to close.

"The happiest relationship exists between the staffs (both paid and voluntary) of the Centres and members.

"The superintendent endeavours to know each boy and girl by name. He learns something of their characters and in many cases knows something of their homes. The helpers lead the games without organising them so fully as to get them played automatically according to rule with the zest and pleasure missing. In the Quiet Games' Rooms they take a hand at draughts, or chess, or at Table Tennis, etc., and so get into intimate touch with the boys and girls. A superintendent writes: 'We cultivated that happy mean of friendliness with the children which breaks down the barrier between them and grown-ups, and whilst giving both freedom in their relations with each other, still allows the respect which ought to come from the child to the adult.'

"*B. Why the Children Attend*

"In one or two of the Centres the children have been asked to write down spontaneously why they attend the Centre. Here are a few of their remarks :—

"(*a*) 'I used to sit in the house, having nothing to do nor nowhere to go. One night somebody told me that a Play Centre had been opened. I ran off at once. When I got there it had begun.

When I got in the boys were all jolly and laughing. It was warm and comfortable inside.'

"(*b*) 'I come to play—there is no other place to play, and I would have to play in the house and in the street, which is not half so interesting.'

"(*c*) 'I come to the Play Centre to enjoy myself, playing games and show children who don't know how to play them. The boxing has improved my strength.'

"(*d*) 'I come to the Play Centre because it is free and it is so dark outside. What is the use of walking about in the dark street when you can come into a warm building like this?'

"(*e*) 'On Wednesday we have a concert and it is always a success. Sometimes boys sing comics and we are nearly bursting with laughing. Prizes are given to the best singers. The prize that is the best of all is being able to come to the Play Centre.'

"(*f*) 'I always come to the Play Centre when I have time because it is such a jolly place. I have told my mother about it, and I will tell my father when he comes home from Egypt.'

"(*g*) 'It is all right when you have nowhere to go on a cold winter's night.'

"(*h*) 'The best thing about the Play Centre is that every day I make a new friend.'

"(*i*) 'I like the Play Centre because it is so jolly and we are out of our mother's road.'

"*C. Conclusion*

"It is not intended to claim too much for the Centres, but it is clearly evident that the children

who are members are being gradually equipped with the means of employing their leisure, not only at present but also in after life, in interesting and healthy-minded ways, and that this acquisition may prove in some measure an antidote to the craving for more exciting forms of amusement. Hobbies may become invaluable not only to the young boy and girl but to the adolescent and juvenile-adult, and assist in some measure in guiding them safely over a difficult period of life, particularly in cases of lax parental control. The habit of rational enjoyment will create a demand for similar opportunities after school age, such, for example, as are offered by the existing various juvenile organisations for social welfare.

"SPURLEY HEY,
"*Director of Education.*

"*February*, 1918."

2. SALFORD

Salford was one of the very earliest Boroughs to establish Play Centres, eight of them (in six schools) being in full swing during the summer of 1917, whereas in nearly all the other great towns the Centres were not opened until September. The number of children admitted was comparatively small—about 100 per evening in each Centre—and the cost of maintenance correspondingly low, amounting to only £520 for the two winter terms. September, 1917, to April, 1918. The Board of Education was much interested in Salford's initiative, and the following Report from the Board's

Inspector (May, 1918) shows what excellent work had already been done in the Borough :—

Copy of Report from Board of Education

"A large proportion of the inner and older parts of the County Borough of Salford is closely built over with small houses with little space for the numerous children of school age in which to exercise their natural instinct for free play when out of school, and the provision of a reasonable allowance of playground space for use during school hours is a matter of great difficulty in many instances.

"Hence the great importance of the courageous step taken last summer by the Salford Education Authority in opening no fewer than six schools (eight Departments) as 'Play Centres' in which, under friendly guidance and unobtrusive control, the children could find room and scope for their natural desire to play.

"No fixed lines were laid down upon which the Centres were to be conducted, nor were the teachers or children drawn necessarily from the particular schools which served as Centres.

"The organisers and teachers—mainly day school teachers, reinforced by a number of voluntary helpers—assisted by the advice and co-operation of the Authority's Officials, and of Members of the Education Committee who were specially interested in the project, developed a great variety both in the range of the actual pursuits followed and also in the methods of organisation.

"In addition to teaching the children how to take

proper part in active outdoor organised games, opportunities for quiet indoor games and reading were provided: in fact, the only limitation was that imposed by the necessity of equipment. The children themselves were encouraged to take an active share in the work of organisation and did so with much keenness.

"Although it is yet early to pronounce a final opinion as to the future form and extent which such Centres will play in the elementary school life of the future, the present experiment has been fully justified, and has proved a boon to both the children and their parents.

"The Education Authority are to be sincerely congratulated upon their public spirit and initiative in starting, on so considerable a scale, upon what may seem to many a novel and hazardous experiment, though in schools other than elementary the need of organised play for scholars outside the school hours has now long been recognised.

"Recognition is also due to the teachers for the enthusiasm and energy with which they have taken up this new work at a time when the ordinary demands made upon them are in various ways increased.

"The Board of Education are watching the experiment with interest and sympathy, and they hope that the Authority will find it possible in the light of the experience already gained to extend the existing provision, as circumstances allow from time to time, to other areas and perhaps in other ways not at present foreseen."

The number of fully equipped Play Centres in Salford is now seven, and the Secretary to the Education Committee writes that "the Committee are satisfied that the movement is one which should be encouraged and developed".

3. Liverpool

Liverpool was a year later than Manchester in opening its Play Centres, but there were many reasons for this, chief among them perhaps the fact that the town possessed a flourishing branch of the Children's Happy Evenings Association. Lady Derby and Mrs. W. H. Williams, then Lady Mayoress, inaugurated this branch in 1911, and Mr. Legge, the Director of Education, bears witness to the good work done by the organisation. In his Memorandum to the Liverpool Education Committee, dated February, 1918—an important document in the history of the Play Centre movement—he writes as follows: "It has provided weekly or fortnightly evenings for children in a number of schools in Liverpool, nearly all of them schools in the poorest districts. The work of this Association has been purely on a voluntary basis, and during the last three years the war has been a most serious handicap, since war needs have engrossed the time and energy of most of the voluntary assistants. But even up to the end of the first year of the war there were thirteen Centres at work, with a total number of attendances during the season of 27,955."

When, however, the Board of Education urged

the adoption of the more comprehensive Play Centre scheme the Education Committee agreed to this policy (in the spring of 1918), and the Director drew up the above-mentioned Memorandum, from which I cannot resist quoting a few very convincing sentences :—

"There is no doubt," he writes, "that this movement is fraught with the utmost possibilities for the benefit of the rising generation. If carried to a successful issue it is bound to affect profoundly and for good the whole generation, for the purpose is nothing less than to offer to all children the benefits of the well-ordered home, and so fulfil the purpose which is admitted to be that of a national policy of education, viz. to afford equal opportunities to all. Furthermore, the socially civilising influence of the Play Centre will provide just the supplement that is required to the intellectual discipline of the Day School. That intellectual discipline has been already supplemented by the teachers in various ways—by personal interest shown in the children and their parents, by the work of the Sports Association, and so forth ; but they cannot do the impossible, and it may now be hoped that there will become available the force they need to support them, that of either a good home influence or of something corresponding, as near as may be, to a good home influence.

"The desideratum to-day is to co-ordinate and enormously to extend, as a definite function of the Education Committee, the work that has been

carried on, admittedly in a somewhat desultory fashion, by such organisations as are referred to above [the Kyrle Society, the Children's Happy Evenings Association, and others]. It is necessary clearly to realise how vast is the aim—hardly less vast indeed than the proposal of the new Education Bill to provide Continued Education for every young person in the country between fourteen and eighteen years of age. The ideal neither in Play Centres nor in Continued Education can possibly be achieved at one blow ; it will have to be realised gradually, and this Memorandum will not propose more than an experimental beginning, though on a scale adequate to the importance of the matter."

Then follows a detailed setting-forth of the aims and the methods of organisation that should govern the new Centres, and finally the recommendation that twelve Play Centres should be opened "initially" in Liverpool when the schools met again after the summer holidays. As a matter of fact, only nine Centres were actually opened on September 23, 1918, but the number has now risen to eleven, and it is hoped to increase them to twenty before very long. The Centres are only open on three evenings in the week. A special feature of the Liverpool organisation is that an Inspector (Mr. J. W. Twidale) has been appointed to supervise the arrangements of all the Centres ; his functions are, indeed, analogous to those of our "Visiting Secretary" in London, and we believe that the energy and goodwill which he has thrown into the work have conduced not a little to the success

which has attended the first year's working of the Play Centres in Liverpool. The paid staff consists almost entirely of teachers from the elementary schools, who heartily welcome this opportunity of getting to know their children better, and there has also been a fair sprinkling of voluntary helpers. In one respect the Liverpool Play Centres have been most fortunate; they have inherited the whole stock of games and equipment possessed by the Happy Evenings Association, which made over their "plant" as a free gift to the new Centres; hence the cost for the first year has not been so heavy as it would otherwise have been. The estimated expenditure was £400 per Centre, based on a programme of three evenings per week, but it is not yet possible to know whether this figure has been exceeded. Nor are the attendances for the first year yet accessible, but the average attendance *per evening* during the first week was 2887, which at three evenings per week and forty weeks in the year gives a total attendance of nearly 350,000.

4. Birmingham

It was in October, 1917, that the first five Play Centres under the Birmingham Education Committee were opened "as an experiment". Now there are six, and the chief organiser writes: "We feel that they have met a real need, and great improvement in the health and also in the mental state of the children has been very marked". The five Centres were divided into two for boys, two

for girls, and one mixed, and at the end of the first winter's Session the Central Care Committee reported on them very favourably as follows :—

"The Centres were a marked success, and certainly achieved their purpose in providing relaxation and enjoyment for the children. The superintendents introduced a great variety of healthy team games, dancing, boxing, handwork in many forms, singing, reading, and other pastimes. The children very often had their own choice of games and occupation, and although they were under discipline it was almost unperceived by them, especially after the first few weeks. A great improvement in the children's manners towards each other and in their fairness in play, and a general toning down of the stronger and rougher children were noticeable as the session progressed. It was thus proved that the Centres, in addition to their great physical benefits, had a certain moral value in this unobtrusive character training. About 1000 children were admitted at the beginning, 300 more tickets were issued as some of the children left, and the average attendance through the session was over 600. The Centres were staffed approximately at the rate of 25 children to each member."

Apparently the "mixed" Centre was considered the most successful in the first year, for the sixth Centre was organised on the "mixed" principle, and one of the original Girls' Centres was converted into a Mixed Centre for the second year. The Superintendent's Report on this converted Centre is so vivid that I quote it here in full :—

Tilton Road Play Centre (Mixed)

Report for Session, 1918-19

Number on roll 250.

Average attendance per night for Session, 188·4.

The Staff consists of—

(*a*) A Superintendent.
(*b*) One Chief Assistant Master.
(*c*) One Assistant Master.
(*d*) Four Women Assistants.

The average number of children per class works out at thirty. For an ideal Play Centre there should not be an average of above twenty.

I consider that I have an exceptionally capable, industrious, and original Staff.

This Session Tilton Road was opened as a Mixed Centre, and we all feel that the play has been much more enjoyable. We find boys have been very keenly interested in the girls' work, particularly the dancing, and the girls have been delighted with the physical work of the lads, especially the boxing, fencing, and punch-ball. It is a very good thing for brothers and sisters to come to the same Play Centre and watch, and sometimes share, in each other's games. At home there is little opportunity for them to see what each other can do. It is surprising how little the girls know of their brothers' lives and pursuits, and vice versa.

The efforts of my Staff to teach the children to play have been most successful. We have to turn away many children every night, who try to get in

without tickets. Play Centre is so popular that one little girl, who had tried to get in for many nights in succession, brought 2d. to pay, thereby thinking to gain admission.

The children's eagerness to come is the best testimonial to the efforts of my Staff.

We use six classrooms and two halls. These enable us to carry out a big physical programme which makes the Centre so popular. Each girls' class gets thirty-five minutes' dancing and organised games in the hall every night. Each boys' class gets thirty-five minutes in the main hall for games needing floor space, games in which every boy in the class can join. In the classrooms the girls have raffia work, doll-dressing, painting, handwork of various descriptions, drawing on blackboards, card games, reading, and dramatising. Occasionally the girls arrange a concert on their own. In the boys' classrooms there are draughts, cards, boxing, punch-ball, table-tennis, paints, tracing, pitching, and shooting—games in which two, three, or four boys take part.

The boys' shoes were bad, and were a drawback to them in their physical work. Each boy has made for himself a pair of slippers out of old carpet and sacking. These they find extremely useful. They were most keen on making them.

During the past week or two, when weather permitted, we have spent most of the time in organised physical work in the playground, the girls showing a keen interest in skipping and ball games of all descriptions, while the older lads couldn't

leave the football alone. Every night the children go home just wanting a little more.

The more experience I have of Play Centre work, the more firmly am I convinced that the physical side of it is the great attraction and consequently the great necessity. In the small rooms of their homes, and the confined and cramped spaces of their back-yards, the children have not room to exercise the freedom of their limbs. They certainly have the side streets and the entries, but they are chased out of these by the neighbours who do not like the noise. It is natural to children to be active and noisy, and if they can come to a place where they can give vent to their activities and feel absolutely free to play at whatever they want, so much the better for them and their development.

From the physical point of view Play Centre work cannot be rated too highly.

As regards the older lads and girls, while their energies are employed in physical work and they are enjoying themselves so keenly, there is no time for the low thoughts and actions, so often engendered by their home environment, to show themselves. Play Centre should be a second and better home for them.

Play Centre has developed a sense of behaviour, which should increase as the work progresses. The children realise that behaviour must take the place of school discipline, and although they know they are free to do as they like, it is necessary to deport themselves in such a way that they are not nuisances to others whose tastes differ.

If Play Centre fosters a spirit of orderly behaviour, a sense of give and take, and is the means of encouraging free and natural expression of thought and action with a view to doing the right and fair because *it is* the right thing to do, then I think Play Centres are doing a great deal towards making "a new and better England".

(Signed) G. WALLACE,
Superintendent.

At one of the Girls' Centres the superintendent could not resist admitting some of the older boys who begged most piteously to be allowed in.

"The Centre was provided for Girls and Infants, which arrangement of course only includes boys of seven and eight years old. Many boys from the Upper Department have asked to be allowed to come in sometimes. They have been admitted from time to time—their behaviour was splendid and appreciation evident. They always withdrew on being requested to do so. This practice, however, had to be discontinued, because the number of boys who wished to come grew too rapidly, and we had not accommodation for them. When some could not get in, they vented their feelings at the windows, but this only happened on two occasions, and was the only little trouble we had. It was not fair for some boys, viz. the first-comers, to be admitted and others refused, so we discontinued the practice entirely. I have been asked by numbers of most polite boys, 'Do you think there will ever be a Centre for us?' and have answered, 'I hope so'."

But at the Boys' own Centre at another school they had a glorious time. The superintendent writes :—

"The last quarter of an hour each evening has been devoted to—

"General assembly in hall.

"Marching.

"Singing or rather shouting of patriotic songs.

"Band practice.

"God save the King.

"Perhaps the item Band Practice requires a word or two of explanation. When the Centre opened one or two boys were noticed with tin whistles protruding from their pockets. A 'Band' soon sprang into existence, and was the means of great enjoyment and amusement, not only to the performers, but to the listeners, teachers included. The boys were encouraged to bring 'instruments,' and soon mouth organs, musical submarines, combs, various substitutes for bones and cymbals and a Jew's harp found their way into the band, which sometimes approached fifty performers. Yes, I quite agree, that the harmony could have been improved, but I 'hae ma doots' about the boys' enjoyment. This continued to be very popular for five months.

"I regret that I have no figures to give of the total attendances or the cost of the Birmingham Centres."

5. Newport (Mon.)

In proportion to its population, the town of Newport has shown keener enterprise in its Play Centre policy than almost any other borough. It has no

less than nine Centres, which are open from 5.30 to 7.30 on five evenings per week, with an average attendance of over 2000 per night, and moreover they are kept going *throughout the year*, *holidays included*. The Secretary to the Education Committee reports of them:—

"The children are taken out into the parks and fields when the weather is fine, and during the dark evenings they of course remain in the various Centres. There are several swimming classes and tennis classes, and all outdoor sports are encouraged, including, during the winter, inter-centre football matches. In addition to the ordinary games, a feature is made in the Boys' Centres of boxing and fencing, under, of course, qualified instructors, whilst in the Girls' Centres morris dancing, singing, and needlework are specially encouraged, and there is a reading-room for quiet reading. A room is also set aside for quiet games such as draughts, dominoes, ludo, etc. Lantern lectures are frequently given, and there have been several fancy-dress carnivals. Parents are invited to attend on certain specified nights, and this side of the movement will be encouraged in every way.

"The Staff of each Centre consists of a Superintendent and a sufficient number of paid helpers according to the requirements of the attendance. The total Staff employed is about 50.

"We are informed that since the Play Centres have been running during the past eighteen months, there is a considerably less number of juvenile delinquencies than formerly existed.

"The expenditure during the current year upon these Centres is estimated at £3959."

Thus the Borough of Newport is willing to spend about £2000 a year on the play-time of its children, while Manchester, with perhaps five times the population, spends £2200, and London, with sixty times, has just agreed to spend £3000. Truly we are not surprised that the number of "juvenile delinquencies" in Newport is on the decline!

6. Bradford

The great Yorkshire towns have, as might be imagined, not been behindhand in taking up the new policy urged by the Board of Education. Of the total number of 167 Play Centres now opened outside London, Yorkshire has thirty-seven, or nearly a quarter of the whole, and of these Bradford heads the list with thirteen, while Leeds has six, and Sheffield, Huddersfield, Shipley, and York have all started well with four or three apiece.[1] I should have liked to print reports from all these famous cities, but my space is too limited, and I must therefore confine myself to a brief account of the Play Centre movement as it has shaped itself in Bradford and Leeds.

Bradford has so often been the pioneer in movements of social progress that it will surprise no one to hear that one municipal Play Centre was opened there even before the announcement of the Government Grant. It was, however, on a very small

[1] See list on p. 119.

scale, and it was not until the spring of 1917 that the Education Committee decided, in the Director's words, to "go boldly forward". Eleven Centres were opened as early as June, and another in July, and 4000 children were provided for in the first week. Now there are thirteen Centres, with an average attendance of 1800 per evening, and as the Centres are open on five evenings a week the weekly attendance is about 9000. The total expenditure for last year amounted to £3800, of which, as usual, the Board of Education paid half.

After their first few weeks' experience of the Centres under summer conditions, the Bradford Education Committee reported as follows of the new movement:—

"One vital point which has already emerged from the experiment is that a Play Centre at which nothing is attempted but play, i.e. organised games, cannot be completely successful. As the object of a Centre may briefly be stated to be to train children to find the best means of employing their leisure, both for their own sakes and for the sake of the community, it follows that scope must be given for the development in the individuals of that which most appeals to them. This can only be done by the provision of an attractive and varied programme which will enable the individual voluntarily to select that which most appeals to his tastes. Organised games will, of course, play an important part in the programme, but they should be selected primarily with a view to all-round physical development and to the cultivation of true esprit de corps.

"The occupations provided, in addition to organised games, should be of an educational character with the object of developing the mental and moral sides of the child, and they should offer scope for the child to follow any favourite pursuit or 'bent,' literary, artistic, or manual.

"Music and dancing will form important items in the programme. The children should be led to appreciate really good music (vocal and instrumental), and massed singing in the school style, as opposed to the street or music hall style, will undoubtedly appeal to most of them. The musical teacher could go far with children of musical tastes, and a children's choir or even orchestra would probably be one of the most attractive features of a Centre. There are many talented musicians in the city who would be glad to sing or play for the children occasionally, and there is no better way of cultivating a taste for good music than by saturating the listener with it.

"So with dancing and the other arts. The teacher who is an enthusiast in any direction has great opportunities, in fact the only limits to the possibilities of a Play Centre are the capacities of the Staff."

This report was of necessity couched mainly in the future tense, but after two years' further experience it is pleasant to record the Director's opinion that "the initial success of the movement here has been well sustained, and there is every reason to believe that the Play Centre is an established and permanent factor in education".

7. Leeds

The Director of Education of the city of Leeds sends me the following information on the Play Centres established there :—

Leeds Education Committee

Evening Play Centres

Six evening Play Centres were opened in the artisan districts of Leeds in September, 1917, and the results of two years' experience of this beneficent social and educational work have amply justified the efforts of the Leeds Education Committee, their organisers, and their teachers.

The Centres are usually open on three evenings each week, generally from 5 to 7 p.m., from September to the end of June (except during school holidays). During the year ended March 31, 1919, they were each open about 90 times and the average attendance was 1048. There was in addition an average attendance of 83 babies.

Methods of classification—the most difficult problem for Evening Play Centres—varied in the different Centres, but generally the most effective organisation was to have separate rooms for the different classes of work, e.g. a Reading Room (story-books and picture-books and for "story-telling" by teachers) ; a Sewing Room (embroidery, plain and fancy sewing, dressing dolls, etc.) ; a Writing, Drawing, and Painting Room ; an Occupation Room (light woodwork, toy-making, paper

and cardboard modelling, clay and plasticine modelling, etc.) ; a Games Room (draughts, dominoes, ludo, snakes and ladders, and other parlour games) ; a "Gymnasium" Room (boxing, punch-ball, gymnastics, basket-ball, etc.), with one room set apart for singing, dancing, and organised games for boys and girls, and if necessary another room for organised games for the older boys. There is in each Centre also a Nursery Classroom (with suitable toys, a swing, bricks, dolls, etc.), under the care of a motherly person, for the "babies" who cannot be left at home, and who must be provided for to enable their older brothers and sisters to attend the Centre.

Under this organisation each child has opportunity for exercising individual taste, and perfect freedom or choice of occupation, recreation, and amusement, and is able to leave one room for another at its own will and its own time.

The Centres are becoming attractive children's clubs, and outstanding features at different Centres emphasise the wisdom of appointing as superintendents of Centres teachers who possess strong individuality, freshness of method and initiative, inventiveness, and real interest in this important social work.

Thus at one Centre concerts were given and a Children's Operetta, "Will o' the Wisp," was presented, and sports were held in the playground at the close of the Session.

At another Centre many original models were constructed, and fairly substantial toy motor-cars

were made from scrap material and sold at 2s. 6d. each, and the sale of scent sachets provided additional material. Summer outings and organised rambles were also organised.

At another Centre "Open Nights" and monthly lantern were a permanent feature.

The school activities in the summer term (Easter to end of June) are largely centred on out-of-door sports. Cricket and other games in the school-yard or roof playground or in adjacent parks and open spaces have tended to cement the corporate life of the Play Centre. The boys and girls have learnt to "play the game" and "share with others".

During the forthcoming Session it is hoped to establish properly organised classes in "cobbling".

Despite the difficulties of the dark shadow of the war, and two long periods of closure on account of influenza epidemic, the Session 1918-19 has been a distinct success.

The cost of the maintenance of the Centres during the year ended March 31, 1919, was £151 0 12s. 2d., towards which the Local Authority have received a grant of 50 per cent from the Board of Education.

It will be seen that while the total attendances have been lower in Leeds than in most of the other great towns—about 100,000 for the year, as against 360,000 for Bradford and nearly 500,000 for Newport and Manchester—this is mainly due to the fact that the Centres have only been open about ninety times each during the year. Possibly the conditions

of street life in Leeds do not make a more frequent opening necessary, but in studying the figures one cannot resist the observation that if the existing Centres were kept open for five evenings a week and for forty weeks in the year (as in London), the attendance of children would be more than doubled without any appreciable increase in the cost of plant and material. But on one point Leeds sets the example to the rest: it has apparently accepted and regularised the attendance of babies, which means an enormous boon to the older girls.

8. Sunderland

The great shipbuilding town of Sunderland possesses a very active Child Welfare Association, to which the Education Committee delegates the task of co-ordinating and supervising all the social work for children that is carried out in the Borough. This Association became seriously concerned at the increase in juvenile crime which the war conditions brought about in 1916 and 1917, and applied to the Education Committee for authority to open Play Centres. This was granted in November, 1917 (a maximum number of twelve Centres being authorised), and by the spring of 1918 five Centres had been opened. There are now six, meeting on four evenings per week, and with an average attendance per night per Centre of nearly 200 children. This would give a total attendance for the year (if the Centres are open for forty weeks) of 192,000. The Chief Education Officer writes: "The total cost of running the Centres for the

year ended March 31, 1919, was £1105 19s. 6d. It is hoped to establish additional Centres in other parts of the Borough as soon as the schools recently evacuated by the Military Authority have been renovated."

One of the reports of the superintendents is interesting as showing the small beginnings from which a successful Centre sprang, and I append it here in full :—

Thomas Street Play Centre

Girls and Juniors (*Mixed*)

The above Centre was commenced on Monday, April 15, 1918. It meets each evening (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday), from 5.30 to 7.30.

The number of children who applied for admission on April 15 was forty-nine. Gradually the numbers increased until June 17, when they reached the highest total—232. The average present since the commencement of the Centre is about 160. The number at last meeting was 220.

The time-table varies each evening. A certain amount of physical recreation and suitable handwork, as well as story-telling, reading, and singing, is indulged in by the children. Weather permitting, the children are out in the open-air almost all the evening. It was with great trepidation that we opened our doors the first evening, for we knew that the success or failure of our future depended on the first impression given. The Child Welfare movement is quite new to the district, and it was

evident that it was not quite understood what "Play Centre" meant, for the first evening's numbers were not quite so high as anticipated. Those whom we admitted seemed to come in a spirit of enquiry. Evidently the evening's proceedings impressed favourably, for at closing time the requests for tickets of admittance for friends were numerous, and the following night's increase in numbers proved that they had enjoyed themselves. Our greatest difficulty during those early days was to infuse an atmosphere of orderly organised play among our visitors. They seemed to think that a Play Centre differed so much from what they understood as school that it needed neither cleanliness nor discipline.

When the Play Centre opened the most noticeable feature was the utter lack of initiative among the children to amuse themselves. They were quite willing to be amused, but did not know how to begin.

At first, in order to see what was really needed, the stock (books, paper, pencils, games, etc.) was placed in various rooms, and the children were allowed to decide what they would do. The older girls settled down to reading and embroidery, but the younger ones wished to change their occupation every few minutes. Some also wilfully destroyed the materials. At this point, the helpers decided to follow a definite plan—dancing, singing rhythmic work, and various games were undertaken, and the children chose which they would do. This plan seemed to work better, for although a certain

amount of freedom is allowed, and the children can change from one occupation to another, usually, save where games are being taken in the open-air, the children prefer to remain at their handwork, dancing, etc., until the general assembly towards the end of each Session.

On the whole, we are finding the children more responsive, and they are now beginning to have definite ideas as how they would like to spend their time.

The increase in the attendance shows that a Centre was badly needed in this neighbourhood.

HANNAH C. ALDER, DOROTHY ROSS } *Joint Superintendents.*

June 24, 1918.

Finally, the Chairman of the Child Welfare Association concludes his report with these words:—

"The Play Centre Movement would appear to be the solution for many of the juvenile social questions at present before the responsible authorities of the town, and it is to be hoped that, in any schemes for housing and the development of the Borough, the question of adequate spaces being reserved for Recreation and Play for all classes of the community will not be overlooked."

9. NORWICH

The Organiser of Elementary Education for the City of Norwich—the famous old Capital of the Eastern Counties—sends me the following report on the progress of the movement there. From

the reports of his superintendents, which I have also seen, it would appear that the need for evening recreation among these Norwich children is as great as it is anywhere, but so far it has only been possible to open the Centres during the summer months. With this limitation, however, they have been an unqualified success, and the improvement in the children's manners, and in the intelligence of backward children, has been specially noted. The Organiser writes :—

"The experiment of organising Evening Play Centres was first tried in Norwich during the summer of 1917, when two Centres were opened and carried on during the summer months. These Centres proved so popular that it was desired to extend the Session during the autumn, but owing to the Lighting Order this was found impossible. In 1918 the Education Committee increased the number of Play Centres to six, the locality of each Centre being determined by the lack of suitable provision in the neighbourhood for the recreation of children out of school hours. Again, the Centres were so successful that the Committee decided to increase the number to eight in 1919. At present, therefore, there are eight Evening Play Centres (two for boys, one for boys and girls, and five for girls) open on four evenings per week from 6 to 7.30 p.m. The Session opened in April and will continue until September. The Centres are staffed by teachers from the elementary schools, and the Staff consists of a superintendent and three or four assistants. The average number of children in

attendance at each Centre is from 100 to 120, and the cost of maintenance is approximately £60 per Centre per Session.

LIST OF LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES NOW CONDUCTING EVENING PLAY CENTRES

Area.	No. of Centres.	Area.	No. of Centres.
Aberdare	2	Manchester	11
Acton	2	Middlesex	4
Birkenhead	1	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	3
Birmingham	6	Newport (Mon.)	8
Blackburn	2	Norwich	9
Bradford	13	Nottingham	9
Burton-on-Trent	2	Oldbury	1
Carlisle	3	Plymouth	4
Cheltenham	2	Portsmouth	5
Coventry	1	Preston	2
Darlington	2	Salford	7
Dewsbury	1	Scarborough	1
Dudley	6	Sheffield	4
Ealing	2	Shipley	4
Hereford	1	Southampton	1
Hornsey	2	South Shields	2
Huddersfield	4	Sunderland	6
Ilkeston	1	Swansea	2
Ipswich	1	West Bromwich	2
Kingston-upon-Hull	1	West Ham	2
Lancs.	1	Wood Green	1
Leeds	6	Worcester	2
Lincs. Lindsey	2	York	3
Liverpool	10		

Total No. of Centres 167

" " Local Education Authorities 47

CHAPTER VII

Vacation Schools and Organised Playgrounds

1. The Vacation School at the Passmore Edwards Settlement

THE Play Centre movement sprang, as we have seen, from small beginnings at Marchmont Hall and the Passmore Edwards Settlement during the last years of the nineteenth century, and we may truthfully say that our efforts there did not owe their inspiration to the work of any other organisation, either in England or America. They arose spontaneously from the needs of the district, combined with the exceptional opportunities afforded by the Settlement building. But in the case of the Vacation School which was first opened by Mrs. Ward in these same buildings in 1902, the case was slightly different, for Vacation Schools and organised playgrounds had been carried on in New York since 1894, and Mrs. Ward was well aware of the fact. When in 1908 she paid a visit to the United States she was to hear in much detail of the magnitude of the American effort—of the thirty-one Vacation Schools that were then running, under the Board of Education, in New York City alone, and of the magnificent work

THE VACATION SCHOOL: CLASSES IN THE SETTLEMENT GARDEN

of the Playground Association of America—but in 1902 her knowledge of this movement was derived mainly from an article in the "Nineteenth Century" by Mr. Henry Curtis, and it was her own imaginative realisation of the possibilities of such a scheme that led to the foundation of the Settlement Vacation School. The Settlement building stood once more ready to her hand; the active goodwill of the Duke of Bedford—owner of the garden and of an attractive piece of "waste land" beyond—was easily enlisted, and a fund raised among eight or ten of Mrs. Ward's old supporters and friends, who undertook to see her through this new experiment.

Nor was the London School Board—then still the Education Authority for London—behindhand with its encouragement and help, for it willingly agreed to make the school a generous loan of school furniture and manual training equipment, and watched the experiment throughout with sympathetic interest. Now as I write the Settlement Vacation School is entering upon its eighteenth Session, for so much is it beloved by the child-population of St. Pancras that not even the war has been allowed to interrupt its existence.

The need for some organised occupation for the children of our great cities during the summer holidays must be obvious to anyone who will take the trouble to wander, with the eye of vision, through some of these squalid streets in the month of August. The children are everywhere, playing in roadways, gutters, and on doorsteps, but playing

too often in a bored and weary way, or with that loud-voiced quarrelsomeness that reveals the lack of real pleasure in the game. Yet it is no less obvious that the hard-worked teachers of our elementary schools must have their summer holiday, and that the children should have their break from the routine-work of the year; what alternative, then, can be offered them to the unrelieved monotony of the street? Here it was that our experience with the Children's Recreation School came to our assistance, and showed us that with the same simple equipment and kindly supervision the same result might be obtained in August as we had already obtained in the winter evenings. But the organisation of the school was of necessity somewhat more elaborate than that of the evening classes and occupations, for not only was the number of children to be dealt with larger, but a complete double time-table had to be arranged, in the building and the garden, according to the vicissitudes of the weather. Mrs. Ward was fortunate, however, from the very outset in securing as director of the school Mr. E. G. Holland, an assistant master of the Highgate Secondary School, who, although the work was wholly new to him, combined an astonishing mastery of detail with an unbounded enthusiasm for the cause. "Mr. Holland," wrote Mrs. Ward in her first year's report on the school, "was called upon at a fortnight's notice to conduct a wholly novel experiment, in a large building quite unknown to him and never designed for a school. Twelve

subjects were taught by as many teachers in twelve classrooms or garden encampments. It was part of the scheme that each child should be alternately in the building and in the garden; but when rain came the whole school had to be housed in the building. If anyone will think what this means in the way of arrangement and time-table, he will appreciate the fact that from the beginning of the school to the end there was never the slightest hitch. The children moved from house to garden, or from class to class, at the sound of a bell, each knowing his or her place; and, if wet weather came, the wet weather arrangements were instantly brought into play, and worked quite smoothly." This simple but perfect organisation was entirely the work of Mr. Holland and Miss B. Churcher, who again co-operated from behind the scenes with her unfailing skill and energy, and the best testimony to Mr. Holland's work is that he remained in command of the school for thirteen consecutive years, until the tide of war broke in confusion over it, and carried him away to other labours.

The number of children admitted to the Vacation School amounted to 750 in the first two years (divided into a morning and an afternoon school); but from 1904 onwards it became possible to enlarge the scheme by bringing into use the buildings of the Invalid Children's School across the playground, and attendances of over 1000 per day (again divided into two schools) were soon reached. This was, of course, without any element of compulsion, and

after careful precautions had been taken to see that no child who had any chance of a country holiday should be admitted to the school. The parents took an eager interest in all that their children reported to them of their doings there, and every year the Session was brought to an end by an "Open Day," on which the parents were invited to come in and inspect the children's handiwork and to watch the display of dancing, drill, acting, and singing with which the school concluded. Many were the expressions of gratitude and appreciation that we heard at these displays, and many the hopes that the school would come again next year to show the children how to use their time. Till now it has been possible to fulfil these hopes, at a cost varying from £150 to £350 per annum, but the raising of this money is a considerable additional item in Mrs. Ward's yearly budget, and this year the necessary rise in the teachers' salaries has meant that only half the number of children can be catered for as compared with former years. It is really an anomaly that Vacation Schools and Organised Playgrounds should not yet be included in the purview of the Government Grant, and we hope that not many months will pass before this omission is remedied.[1]

2. Other Vacation Schools in London

Two years after the opening of the Vacation School at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, three

[1] For a detailed account of the working of the Settlement Vacation School see Appendix III, "Mr. Holland's Report".

THE SETTLEMENT VACATION SCHOOL: ASSEMBLY IN THE PLAYGROUND

or four other "holiday schools" sprang up in different parts of London—partly inspired by the success of our experiment and partly owing their origin to the example of America. Of these the most important was that organised by the Robert Browning Settlement in the heart of Walworth—that dreary region to the south of the river which holds the unenviable distinction of being the most densely populated borough in London. The Warden of the Settlement had long wished to open a Holiday School on the American model for the children of this squalid district, but it was not until 1904 that he was able to put the idea into practice. The success of our school at the Passmore Edwards Settlement had also much encouraged him, but we cannot claim that the Browning Settlement School was directly inspired by ours. In any case, a Holiday School of a very interesting type was opened here in 1904, in a Council School close by, and since the principal aim of those who work in Walworth is to get the children out of it, the scheme included from the beginning a series of outings by tram to Tooting Common. Here the children found themselves for the first time in a bit of real country, and made their first attempts at Nature Study. The thistle they promptly named *holly*, and the water-lilies *wild rhubarb!* The daily average of children who attended the school and shared in these outings was 231, and since the school was run for four years entirely by volunteers the total cost each season only amounted to about £30. Then in 1908 the Ragged School Union

gave a substantial grant towards the expenses of the school, and this meant that the whole venture could be transformed into the daily transportation of 300 children by tramcar to Greenwich Park, where they could play and learn and have their dinner on the shady grass—a dinner provided also by the Settlement fund. For these were the days of increasing agitation in favour of free meals for necessitous children, when the London County Council had not yet adopted the policy of "school dinners," and the Browning Settlement, which took a foremost part in the battle for the children's food, was glad to be able to provide such an excellent object-lesson in the value of even two or three weeks' good food to the half-starved child. In the next year, 1909, the battle had been won, and the 300 necessitous children had lost the "wolfish hunger-look"[1] that their faces had always borne before; but still the daily expeditions to Greenwich satisfied still deeper yearnings in their little souls. This "almost ideal" Holiday School, as the L.C.C. Inspector named it, subsisted until the outbreak of war, when it was found impossible to carry it on any longer. In the opinion of the Browning Settlement authorities it is now the part of the London County Council to follow where they and the Passmore Edwards Settlement have shown the way.

In this same first year of the "Provision of Meals (Necessitous Children) Act," the suggestion was made to Mrs. Humphry Ward by Dr. Niall (one

[1] See "The Central City Swarm," p. 156, issued by the Robert Browning Settlement.

of the Medical Officers to the L.C.C.) that the Play Centres Committee should endeavour to make some provision during the school holidays for a small number of "delicate and necessitous" children in a typical East End district. Mrs. Ward willingly agreed to the proposal; one of the poorest and most crowded parts of Hoxton was chosen for the experiment, and the London County Council granted the use of the airy little "Mentally Defective Centre" at Hoxton House School, while the Care Committees of the three nearest schools were all asked to recommend a certain number of delicate children from their lists, who would be the most likely to benefit by a month of wise care and good feeding. Dr. Niall himself examined the children and selected about fifty of the most ill-nourished; the Alexandra Trust served the dinners—an excellent variety—and two kindergarten teachers and a nurse took charge of the children for the whole day and gave them games and quiet occupations in the shade of the playground trees. By the end of the four weeks there was a noticeable improvement, both physical and mental, in almost every child. The careful and detailed reports sent in by the nurse at the close of the school showed that most of the children increased in weight, some of them very considerably, and of the general results the nurse wrote: "There is no doubt in my mind that all the children have derived great benefit from the food, coupled with the pleasant and happy surroundings. Without exception they became, as time went on, more cheerful, looked brighter and stronger, showed

a desire to be clean and tidy in their habits, and were much improved in their behaviour." Thus the deterioration which would inevitably have set in with these delicate children during four weeks of street life, with no school midday meal to support them, was successfully avoided, and the children were returned to school instead in a better and stronger condition than when they left it.

A similar enterprise, but without the midday meals, was carried out by our Committee in the Devons Road School, Bow, where a special feature was made of the *roof playground* for the girls and little ones. On these airy heights the children improved remarkably in health and looks during the summer holiday (1909), while the bigger boys played cricket and other games in the playgrounds below and were frequently taken on expeditions to Hampstead Heath and Golders Hill; 390 children daily attended this Holiday School, at a total cost for the four weeks of £43.

For the better information of those interested in this subject, I append the accounts for the year 1909 of the three Vacation Schools held under the auspices of our Committee (see opposite page).

In the next year (1910) the London County Council itself organised six Vacation Schools in different parts of London, which proved a great boon to the children concerned. An average of 400 children per school were admitted, and the experiment was repeated in the next year under still better conditions. But since 1911 it has lapsed, and we do not know whether the Education Com-

mittee intend, now that normal conditions are returning, to revert to this pre-war enterprise.

EXPENDITURE

	Passmore Edwards Settlement Vacation School (3 weeks) Av. att. 1140.	Bow School (4 weeks) Av. att. 390.	Hoxton School (4 weeks) Av. att. 42.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Salaries	173 11 0	30 12 10	27 9 8
Cleaning and caretaking	12 0 9	—	—
Equipment	43 5 5	5 1 1	6 14 6
Expeditions and swimming	1 4 11	5 19 8	—
Printing and stationery	5 8 9	0 5 1	—
Postage and carriage	4 8 1	0 15 8	0 15 9
Provision of meals	—	—	16 12 6
Sandpit	—	—	7 6 0
Sundries	8 11 11	0 5 2	1 8 6
	£248 10 10	£42 19 6	£60 6 11

3. Vacation Schools Outside London

I regret that I have not been able to obtain full information concerning the many efforts to provide organised play for children during the holidays in the other great towns, but I should be sorry not to make some mention of the Holiday Playgrounds carried on for many years by Canon Wilson at Worcester, of the organised recreation provided in the Parks throughout the summer by the Local Authorities of Sheffield and Bolton, Lancs., and of the Vacation Play Centre organised by the Ancoats University Settlement (Manchester) in 1916. Before the war, also, the City Council of Manchester had a most comprehensive scheme of recreation under "games leaders" in the City Parks, eleven playgrounds being organised from April to October.

4. Organised Playgrounds

When Mrs. Ward paid her first and only visit to the United States in the spring of 1908, she heard much of the admirable work carried out in New York during the summer months by the Playground Association of America and by the Public Schools Athletic League. There the corporate sense of the community had been aroused sooner than in these islands to the need for providing wholesome recreation during the long hot summer weeks for the children of the great cities, and in New York alone, in the summer of 1907, 100 school playgrounds had been equipped and opened under the supervision of the City Education Authority for the swarming and polyglot population of the back streets. Mr. Jacob Riis, Honorary Vice-President of the Playground Association, put the case admirably in an after-dinner speech during Mrs. Ward's visit to New York. "I know," he said, "for I have been a boy myself, that every lad is a little steam-boiler, and with steam always up, with the same potential energy as the steam-boiler, and with the same potential perils. A steam-boiler has its safety-valve, and a boy has his. You can sit on the safety-valve of a steam-boiler if you choose, but you are an awful fool if you do. But what else is it we have been doing until quite recently, than sitting on the safety-valve of the boy? The boy's safety-valve is his play. Sit on that, hold it down hard, and you will have trouble. Give him the gutter for a playground and nothing else, and crime will

come as a matter of course." Therefore the Department of Education of the City of New York had at length taken the advice of the voluntary associations, had *organised* some of the school playgrounds and a section of the public parks for the children's amusement, and were so convinced of the wisdom of this policy that larger and larger appropriations were being made every year for this purpose from the city's revenues. The Department had, moreover, grasped and acted upon the fundamental principle that mere equipment without "skilful and loving direction" is useless, a sheer waste of public funds. "Seward Park," said Dr. Maxwell, the City Superintendent of Schools, "was purchased and equipped at enormous expense for a children's playground. This park is now filled at all hours of the day and evening with loafers who teach boys and girls to steal, and to be impure; and all because the supervision and direction are inadequate. I have watched for a whole afternoon a poorly-equipped afternoon playground run by the Board of Education in a very poor location; and side by side the magnificently equipped playground in the neighbouring park. The former was crowded, notwithstanding its poor equipment. The park playground was practically empty. Why? Because the vacation playground was under intelligent direction and the park playground was not. Intelligent leadership is the secret of successful recreation, as well as of successful work—so deeply laid is the law of imitation in human nature."

In London, as my readers probably know, the

school playgrounds are mostly thrown open during the holidays, but nothing is done to attract the children to use them. That being so, they are for the most part left empty, and the children herd in the dull, narrow streets or the dangerous main thoroughfares, and London's bill for accidents and petty crime goes up. In the spring of 1911, however, Mrs. Ward determined that some effort should be made to do for London what was so abundantly done for New York; a special sub-committee of the Evening Play Centres Committee was formed, under the Chairmanship of Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, then Under-Secretary to the Board of Education; a special fund was raised, and a scheme laid before the London County Council for the "organisation" of fifty playgrounds during the summer holidays—twenty-six for girls and infants and twenty-four for boys. The Council readily accepted the scheme, and assisted it by the loan of tables, chairs, benches, jumping-stands, and mats, while permission was given for the use of two halls in each school if wet weather made this desirable.

Twenty-six schools in the poorest districts of East, North, and South London were chosen by the Committee, in all but two of which both the boys' and girls' playgrounds were used; a Games Master was carefully selected for each boys' ground and a superintendent, with a working-woman from the neighbourhood to assist her, for each girls' ground, while a system of paid monitors was instituted which worked very successfully. (The pay was only 1s. 6d. per week!) The superintendents

received £2 a week each and the working-woman 10s., while an extra payment of 7s. 6d. a week was made to the school-keepers for the additional trouble thrown upon them. Three daily sessions were held, from 10.30 to 12, from 2.30 to 4.30 and from 5.30 to 7, and the children were informed of the scheme before the end of the school term by the distribution of handbills and the display of posters. Finally, a most important feature of the scheme was the appointment of two inspectors—Mr. J. E. Yerbury and Miss Elsie Wilkes—who were at work from early in the morning till late at night, visiting every school under them frequently, attending to any difficulty that might arise, arranging swimming parties, keeping up the stock of games-material, and otherwise dealing with the endless details on which the smooth running of the grounds depended.

The playgrounds were an immediate success. "Here and there," wrote Mrs. Ward in her report to "The Times" after the close of the experiment, "they were almost stormed in the first days. 'I let in 400 boys,' wrote a superintendent after his first session, 'and the street outside seemed still black with boys.' The crowding at the gates continued to give trouble in some cases, till, with the help of the ever-friendly policeman, regular double lines were formed, and the children came in without difficulty, and without any crushing of the little ones. Inside one came always upon a cheerful scene. In the girls' playgrounds, during those hottest August days, one saw crowds of girls

and babies playing in the shade of the school buildings, or forming happy groups for reading or sewing, or filling the trestle tables under the shelters, where were picture-books to be looked at, beads to thread, paints and paper to draw with, or wool for knitting, or portable swings where the elder girls could swing the little ones in turn. Then, if you asked a school-keeper to pass you through a locked door, you were in the boys' playground, where balls were whizzing, and the space was divided up by a clever superintendent between the cricket of the bigger boys—very near, often, to the real thing—and the first efforts, not a whit less energetic, of the younger ones. In one corner, also, there would be mats and jumping stands, in another a group playing tennis with a chalked line instead of a net, while the shelters were full, as in the girls' grounds, of all kinds of quiet occupations. Management was everything. It was wonderful what a superintendent with a real turn for the thing could make of his ground, what a hold he got upon his boys, and how well, in such cases, the boys behaved. There was a real loyalty and esprit de corps in these grounds; and when in the last week 'sports' and displays were organised for the benefit of the parents, it was really astonishing to see with what ease a competent man or woman could handle a crowded playground, how eagerly the children obeyed, how courteous and happy they were.

"A word of acknowledgment also must be given to the school-keepers, the majority of whom were most friendly and helpful. And as to the

PEEPS INTO A PLAYGROUND

children, one saw once again how good is the main stuff out of which this nation is built, and one was touched once again with the tragic sense of how much still remains to be done to enable these docile, quick-minded, affectionate, and often wonderfully unselfish boys and girls of school age to pass safely through the difficult years which lie between them and mature life. 'The devotion of the elder children to the younger brothers and sisters,' says Mr. Yerbury, 'is very striking; and I was most agreeably surprised to find this not only in the girls, but also a strongly marked characteristic of the boys. The behaviour of the children throughout the month has been as nearly perfect as possible in the circumstances.' Here and there, indeed, a few children have had to be dismissed or excluded; but the weekly reports of the superintendents to the chairman amply bear out Mr. Yerbury.

"To return to figures. We reckon that about 25,000 children have been brought within the range of the playgrounds, many, especially of the girls and little ones, attending every day and every session—five days a week and five hours a day. The attendances in the first week were 106,000. There was a serious drop in the figures of the second week, owing partly to Bank Holiday, when the grounds were closed, and partly to the strike. A Bermondsey superintendent found it hard, for instance, to cope with the attractions of a van of sweets and jam, overturned in a street near by, where the children swarmed about it like little

wasps. Or in Limehouse or Stepney, a superintendent admitting her children would suddenly see the whole flock take to its heels to follow a strike procession. But even with Bank Holiday and the strikes, the attendances were over 60,000 for the second week ; with the third week they went up with a bound, and the fourth week, of which the complete figures are not yet before me, has probably been the best of any. The understanding between the superintendents and the children grew steadily more complete ; the discipline and organisation of the best playgrounds improved every day, and the 'sports' and displays for parents of the last week were in many cases a really remarkable sight. The gratitude of the mothers for the help given to themselves in the exhausting heat, and for the kindly shepherding which their children found in the grounds, was often pleasant to see and hear.

"The cost of the experiment worked out at £981 17s. Taking the attendances during the four weeks at 400,000 in round figures, it will be seen that each attendance cost a fraction more than a halfpenny. Supposing a child attended five hours a day and five days a week, as many of the girls and little ones did, the cost of providing an individual child with play, occupations, and supervision, for the four weeks of August, works out at a little more than 2s. 6d., or about 7½d. a week.

"It is by no means claimed that this first experiment was everywhere perfection. Those who organised it have learnt a great deal from it ; and if funds permit, and the County Council renew

their support another year, it is hoped that various improvements may be made in the arrangements.

"More help, for instance, might be given to the superintendents of the more crowded grounds; string hammocks on wooden supports, like those of the portable swings which have been such a striking success this year, might be provided for the small babies to sleep in, and parked in a shady corner under the care of relays of elder girls; a couple of visiting nurses might be attached to the staff; and the swimming facilities might be greatly extended. And possibly a still larger number of playgrounds may be opened. In these congested districts of working-class London, remote often from open spaces, with nothing but the narrow, crowded, and dangerous streets for the too often uncared-for children to play in—or loaf in—from morning till night, it is surely an absurdity that the school playgrounds with which these regions are studded should be either closed or empty throughout the holiday weeks, when such use might be made of them as I have attempted to describe."

The actual attendances in this first year were as follows:—

1st week . . .	106,920 (700 sessions).
2nd week . . .	60,921 (600 sessions).
3rd week . . .	138,911 (750 sessions).
4th week . . .	117,249 (740 sessions).
Total attendance	424,001 (2790 sessions).

Average weekly attendance for the four weeks 105,001

The attendances were always *lowest* at the *morning* session, and *highest* at the *afternoon* session.

Taking the third week as an example, the total attendances at the respective sessions were as follows :—

Third Week Attendances

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Boys' grounds	11,593	14,930	12,772
Girls' grounds	18,861	28,569	22,004
Totals	30,454	43,499	34,776

So hopeful had the result of this first experiment in Organised Playgrounds proved that the London County Council decided in the spring of the next year (1912) to share with our Committee in the task of organising a still larger number in the August holidays. Forty playgrounds were opened by our Committee, and forty by the L.C.C. The organisation of those under our Committee was in many ways improved upon, as will be seen by the following extracts from Mrs. Ward's report to the subscribers :—

Playground Staff.—Last year's experience led the Committee to the conclusion that in view of the large attendances which might again this year be expected, it would add very much to the efficiency of the grounds if each superintendent could have a trained assistant. It was therefore decided to engage forty assistants from among Training College students. Last year the boys' superintendents had the assistance of monitors only, and

the superintendents of the girl's grounds had each a working-woman and monitors. This year each boys' superintendent had a trained assistant and a paid monitor, and each girls' superintendent a trained assistant, a paid monitor, and, in some cases, a working-woman helper as well. The extra cost to the Fund is felt to have been fully justified. The Training College students did excellent service, bringing much vigour and enthusiasm to the work, and adding very greatly to the success of this, our second year's, experiment. The Committee are greatly indebted to one of their members, Miss Lloyd Evans, the Principal of the L.C.C. Fulham Training College, for the very great trouble she took in selecting and recommending students from her College for the work. Their knowledge of singing games and morris dancing, and their training in many forms of handwork, made them most valuable assistants, and they on their side will surely have gained much from this experience in recreative work. In two cases, specially recommended students were appointed superintendents, and the experiment was so satisfactory that it raises the question whether it might not be possible to staff the girls' playgrounds, at any rate, entirely with students who have just completed their training, and so to obviate the difficulty of employing teachers who, we can but feel, really need their full month's holiday. But this could only be satisfactory if the grounds so staffed were subject to almost daily inspection by an experienced and directing Inspector, as was the case with the grounds where

the experiment was tried by the Play Centres Committee.

The assistants in the boys' grounds made it possible to give the boys much more swimming this year, since swimming was one of the necessary qualifications for appointment. Our expenditure under this head is £20 in excess of last year. But we hold that the money could hardly be better spent. The superintendents report very warmly of the good work done by their assistants. Perhaps we may here mention that one of these assistants, who earned for himself a specially good report, as a schoolboy attended for years the Play Centre at the Passmore Edwards Settlement, and also the Vacation School held there during the August holidays.

Visiting Nurses.—A new feature of this year's organisation was the engagement of two nurses, who went round to the grounds encouraging cleanliness in the children, excluding any who in their opinion might be infectious, attending to cuts, bruises, sore faces and hands, treating small ailments, and in some cases giving simple talks on hygiene and the care of a baby to groups of the elder girls. The Committee feel that useful work was done in this direction, but it was at first somewhat disturbing to find that in some districts the children took fright at the sight of the nurse, and evinced an unwillingness to come into the ground so long as she was there, the parents also in some cases objecting. However, this attitude towards them did not last long, and was not a serious diffi-

culty. The weekly reports from the nurses show that very many children must have benefited by their care.

Inspection of Grounds.—This year, instead of having two Inspectors, each being responsible for certain playgrounds, the Committee placed all the grounds under the inspection of Mr. J. E. Yerbury, who did such excellent work as Inspector last year, and appointed as his assistant Miss L. Gill, an experienced Play Centre superintendent. The arrangement proved very satisfactory. The Committee feel very strongly that constant inspection of the grounds is essential to their success. And the Inspectors must be *Organising* Inspectors, ready to put right what they find faulty in the organisation of a ground; to determine where additional equipment is needed, and to see that such equipment is provided promptly. The superintendents, who are in many cases quite new to this particular kind of work, must know that in any case of difficulty they have only to write to the Head Inspector, and the next day their ground will certainly receive a visit from either himself or his assistant.

The Inspectors were throughout the four weeks in close and continuous touch with Mrs. Ward, as Chairman of the Committee, under whose direction they acted.

As Chairman, Mrs. Ward also received a weekly report, on forms specially drawn up for the purpose, from each superintendent, and was herself able to visit the grounds and judge of their efficiency.

The grounds were also under the inspection of the L.C.C.

Admission of Children.—The playgrounds were open to any children who liked to come to them. During the last week of the school term fifty hand-bills, giving times of opening, etc., were sent to each of the Head Teachers of the twenty-one schools, with the request that they might be distributed. The Care Committee Organiser of each district where a playground was to be organised was notified of the fact, and asked to make it known to the various Care Committees under her direction.

Occupations.—For the Boys.—Cricket, football, and other organised games; jumping (stands and mats were provided by the L.C.C.), hoops, and racing; painting and drawing; quiet games, such as draughts, dominoes, picture lotto, "Who knows?" hoop-la, throwing the ring, etc.; puzzles, bricks, books, and toys for the smaller boys.

From all the grounds parties of boys were taken to the nearest swimming-baths. Cricket matches were played between teams from the different grounds, and several matches were arranged between teams from the playgrounds under the Play Centres Committee and from those organised by the L.C.C.

For the Girls and Infants.—Singing-games, dancing, skipping-games, rounders, ball games of all kinds, and other organised games; quiet games, needlework (especially doll-dressing), knitting, raffia-work, painting and drawing, story-telling, puzzles,

CORNERS OF A PLAYGROUND

brick-building, etc, dolls, toys, and picture-books. In several of the grounds the big girls did good work in mending their clothes, and though not attracted by the idea at first, became really interested in it. One superintendent writes: "I had much difficulty in *starting* the mending corner till a girl of thirteen came with a big bundle, and an air of determination. I made her 'Mending Monitress,' and put her in charge of the materials. It is a huge success now, and she exhibits her pupils with great pride." And one of the boys' superintendents writes: "Some of the boys have been mending their own clothes, and replacing missing buttons, and seem to take great interest in it".

Trestle tables were used for the quiet occupations, which were for the most part carried on under the shelters.

Each girls' playground was provided with two simple trestle-cots, with washable slings, in which the tiny babies were put to sleep. The portable swings for the small children under five were very popular again this year, and in each girls' playground we provided a stronger swing for children up to the age of eight years. These were a source of endless delight.

Attendances.—In spite of the very wet weather during August, the attendances at the grounds were higher than last year, the *average daily attendance per ground* working out at 509, as compared with 446 in 1911.

The *total attendance* at the *forty* grounds for the four weeks was 386,957. The grounds were not

open on Bank Holiday. As last year, it was found that the afternoon attendances were almost invariably the highest, but there would seem to have been less difference between the morning and evening attendances than last year. Probably the coldness of the evenings would account for this.

On the last day the afternoon and evening sessions were combined at the grounds, as sports had been organised for the boys, and little displays of singing-games, dancing, etc., for the girls, to which parents were invited.

Cost of Playgrounds.—This year, though the Committee only organised forty grounds as against fifty last year, the total expenditure, £1051 15s. 7d., exceeded that of 1911 by £69 18s. 7d., the *average cost per ground* working out at £26 5s. 10½d., as against £24 10s. 11d. in 1911.

This increase in the cost per ground is mainly accounted for by the facts that this year (*a*) the superintendent in each ground was given a trained assistant; (*b*) it was found necessary to spend more on equipment in the way of toys, games, etc., since the stock last year was not really adequate in view of the large attendances; (*c*) two visiting nurses were engaged; and (*d*) it was decided to send many more children to the swimming-baths, the expenditure on swimming this year being £20 in excess of that in 1911.

"Finally, I may perhaps give my own verdict that the playgrounds of 1912, so far as those managed by the Evening Play Centres were concerned—and I regret that reasons of health prevented me from

seeing anything of the grounds managed by the L.C.C., which I was most anxious to do—were even more successful than those of 1911. I think I saw them all with one exception, and my days of visiting were to me the pleasantest of the week, so evident was it that the grounds were thoroughly used and appreciated, and the children happy. There were differences, of course. Some grounds were not so well managed as others; some superintendents had not so much talent as others. But in general the level was high; and where a superintendent was new or lacking in resource, the experience of Mr. Yerbury, gained the preceding year, and of Miss Gill, who has been for some years the superintendent of one of our largest Play Centres, was often most valuable in setting things right. I was accompanied on several occasions by two French teachers, who had already made a study of the Vacation School in Tavistock Place, and were deeply interested in the playgrounds. One was the Directress of the Government College for Girls at Saintes, and the other was the head of the Girls' Lycée at Bordeaux. I understand that the first, Madame Milice, has made a report on what she saw to the French Ministry of Instruction; and the second, Mademoiselle Charron, tells me that it is hoped to start Organised Playgrounds next summer in Bordeaux.

"In conclusion, let me express the warm thanks of my Committee, first to those officials of the Council who helped us in our work, and then—and chiefly—to that handful of generous subscribers

who made it possible in 1911, and again in 1912, to show London what could be done to use the ordinary school playgrounds during the holidays for the pleasure and benefit of London children. The experiment, thanks to the liberal-minded Education Committee of the L.C.C., who watched it carefully, has done what we all hoped it might do; and henceforth we rejoice to know that Organised Playgrounds in the holiday month are to be a recognised part of the Council's educational work. It will not be necessary, therefore, for our Committee to undertake them again."

So far Mrs. Ward's report, but alas, the confident hope expressed in the last lines has not been justified by events. Although we believe that the forty playgrounds organised by the London County Council had been very largely successful, the experiment was not repeated in the next or in succeeding years, and the playgrounds of London were suffered to relapse into that condition of uselessness and sometimes of positive danger to the children's morals from which our efforts in 1911 and 1912 had sought to rescue them. Is it not time that with the return of so much energetic material into the teaching profession, after the five years' hiatus of the war, the Education Authority of London—nay, of the great towns also—should set itself seriously to the task of reclaiming for the use of the children these many acres of wasted ground during the August holidays?

APPENDIX I

Hints on the Establishment and Organisation of Play Centres at the Present Day

THE foregoing sketch of the history of the Play Centre movement has, I hope, conveyed in a general way the principles on which the existing Centres have been organised, but since the whole enterprise was experimental it has of necessity passed through various phases, and it may be well to state here in concise form the results to which our twenty years' experience have brought us. The following hints, therefore, are issued for the guidance of Voluntary Associations and Committees who desire to take advantage of the Board of Education Grant, and to enlist the help of their Local Education Authority in the establishment of Play Centres. Where the Local Education Authority itself opens Play Centres the procedure would be slightly different, but the scheme of organisation would probably remain the same in either case.

1. In the first instance the Committee should apply to the Board of Education, Whitehall, London, for the Circular, Regulations, and Grant Regulations on the subject of Evening Play Centres. (For the convenience of readers, however, we print the Regulations at the end of these notes. The Circular or Memorandum appears on p. 55.)

2. *London Play Centres.*—Those wishing to start additional Play Centres in London are recommended to apply to the Evening Play Centres Committee, Passmore Edwards Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C. 1.

3. *Play Centres Outside London.*—In forming a Voluntary Association or Committee for the starting of one or more Play Centres, it is of course desirable that the Committee of Management should include representatives of the leading organisations concerned with the care of children in the

district—Care Committees—School Managers' Committees—Juvenile Organisations Committees—Child Welfare Societies—Probation Officers, etc.—together with some Head Teachers from the Elementary Schools.

Choice of School.—When the locality which most needs a Play Centre has been determined upon, the schools in that locality are visited with a view to deciding which is best suited for the purposes of a Play Centre. It is important that the school should have large halls and good playgrounds, and that it should be well lighted. It is a great advantage to choose a school which has a Manual Training Centre attached to it, and one, if possible, with gymnastic apparatus on the ground floor.

Application to the Education Authority.—The school having been chosen, application is made by the Committee to the Local Education Authority for the loan of the Infants' Department, and for either the Boys' or the Girls' Hall, for five evenings a week, from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., and for the use of a hall and playgrounds on Saturday mornings for the purposes of a Play Centre, free of charges for rent, cleaning, lighting, and heating. Such "facilities" can be given under the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of 1907.

Application is also made for the use of the Manual Training Centre on one or two evenings in the week for Woodwork Classes for the elder boys attending the Play Centre.

Organisation of a Centre.—The Centre is organised either as a two-session or a one-session Centre. In the first case, two different sets of children attend in an evening for an hour each. In the second, only one set of children attend, but these stay for the whole two hours, changing occupations at half-time. It will easily be seen that a much larger staff is required in the case of the one-session Centre, if the same number of children are to be dealt with as in a two-session Centre, since in the former case all the children are in the school building at the same time.

In some Centres the boys and girls attend on the same nights, and in others on different nights. But in all cases a certain number of children, both boys and girls, are admitted to the Centres every night in the week. These are children specially recommended by the Care Committees, Children's Probation Officers, and other social workers, as needing the

safe shelter and happy play that the Centre can give them, or children whose need has become apparent to the Superintendent of the Centre. Otherwise, the children normally attend the Centres twice or three times a week.

Admission of Children.—When a Centre is first started tickets of admission stating which evenings in the week, and during what hours the children can attend, are sent to the head teachers of the school where the Centre is to be held, and of three or four other schools in the near neighbourhood, who are asked to give the tickets to children whose need they think is greatest. A Centre generally starts with a roll of 500 to 800 children, according as to whether it is organised on a one-session or a two-session basis. This roll very soon increases, as the children ask leave to bring brothers and sisters and friends. After a single registration of name and address all new children are admitted freely, so long as space permits, and no register is called nor are badges of admission given out. But a careful record is kept of the numbers in attendance each evening.

Play Centre Occupations.—Musical Drill, Gymnastic, Morris Dancing, Singing-Games, Organised Games, Woodwork, Cobbling, Basket-work, Needlework, Rug-making, Knitting, Scrap-book-making, Painting and Drawing, Plasticine Modelling, Reading, Story-telling, Quiet Games, Toys, etc., etc.

The Centres are open forty weeks in the year. During the summer they are transferred to the School Playgrounds. Children under school age may be admitted to the Playgrounds.

Staff.—The Play Centre is under the direction of a trained and paid superintendent—usually an experienced social worker, with practical knowledge of drill and games, or kindergarten work. The superintendent has a staff of paid workers, and these are supplemented by voluntary workers. In first staffing a Play Centre a worker is allowed for each forty children. The Cobbling, Woodwork, Basket-work, and Gymnastic Classes cannot take as many as forty children; but, on the other hand, many more than forty can be taken in a large Hall for Singing-Games or Dancing, or in a Quiet Games Room, so that allowing a teacher to every forty children usually works out well in practice.

The following are the Regulations issued by the Board of Education;—

Regulations for Evening Play Centre

(*In force from August* 1, 1917)

1. (*a*) The Board of Education will make grants during each financial year, commencing on April 1, in aid of Evening Play Centres, hereinafter called Centres, which provide after School hours and on Saturdays for the recreation and physical welfare under adequate supervision of children attending Public Elementary Schools.

(*b*) The grant payable in a financial year will be based on the work done and the payments made during the previous financial year except that the grant payable in the financial year commencing on April 1, 1918, will be based on the payments made during the eight months from August 1, 1917, to March 31, 1918.

2. (*a*) Every Centre must be under the direction of some Body of Managers which the Board will regard as responsible for the efficient conduct of the work and for the observance of the Regulations and to which they will pay the grant.

(*b*) Where the Body of Managers is not the Local Education Authority, a person must be appointed to act as Correspondent on behalf of the Managers with the Board or with the Local Education Authority.

(*c*) Where the Body of Managers is not the Local Education Authority, the Board will not pay grants to the Centre if it is not recognised by the Authority for the purposes of Section 13 of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, and (unless the circumstances are exceptional) if it is not aided by the Authority either by placing premises at the disposal of the Body of Managers free of any charge for rent and for heating, lighting, and cleaning, or in some other manner.

3. Every Centre must be suitable in character and financial position to receive aid from the Board and must not be conducted for private profit or farmed out to any member of the Staff.

4. The premises of the Centre, unless it is conducted in the premises of a Public Elementary School, must be approved by the Board for the purpose. They must be sanitary, convenient, safe in case of fire, and suitably equipped. In fine weather on Saturdays and during the summer months as much use as

possible should be made of playgrounds, parks, recreation grounds, and other available open spaces.

5. (*a*) There must be a Superintendent for every Centre who will be responsible for the general conduct, supervision, and discipline.

(*b*) The Assistant Staff must be adequate and suitable.

6. (*a*) Admission to the Centre must be limited to children attending a Public Elementary School.

(*b*) No child while excluded from school on account of infectious illness in its home may be permitted to attend the Centre.

7. The Centre should, as a rule, meet on not less than three evenings in the week and sixty times during the year. Meetings should be of not less than 1½ hours in duration.

8. All returns called for by the Board must be duly made.

9. A record must be kept of the number of children in attendance at each meeting.

10. The Centre must be open at all reasonable times to inspection by the Board and by the Local Education Authority. At least a full week's notice of any alteration in the time of meeting of the Centre or of its temporary closure must be given to the Board's Inspector.

11. Application for recognition or for continuance of recognition of the Centre must be made to the Board annually, through the Local Education Authority, on the prescribed Form, and should ordinarily reach the Board not less than a month before the date on which the Centre opens.

12. (*a*) Where, in the Board's opinion, the Centre is conducted efficiently and with due regard to economy, grant may be paid at a rate not exceeding one-half of the approved expenditure on maintenance.

(*b*) In fixing the rate of grant the Board will take into consideration the scope, character, and efficiency of the work. In particular the Board will have regard to—

(i) the period of the year during which the Centre was open;

(ii) the number and length of the meetings held during the period;

(iii) the number of attendances made by the children during the period.

13. The Board may disregard any items of expenditure

which, in their opinion, should not be taken into account for the purpose of the grant. If it is proposed to make a claim for grant in respect of expenditure on rent or special equipment, the Board should be informed before the expenditure is incurred.

14. When the work of a Centre has been completed in any year, a statement in a prescribed form of the work done during the year should be forwarded to the Board, together with a statement of the receipts and expenditure for the year.

15. Payment of grant is subject to the fulfilment of the conditions laid down in these Regulations, but if any of the conditions have not been fulfilled the Board may nevertheless, when there are special circumstances which would justify it, pay such grant as they may think fit.

16. Grants under these Regulations must be applied solely for the purposes of Play Centres recognised by the Board. If the grant payable is found to exceed the outstanding liabilities, an instalment not exceeding the outstanding liabilities may be paid, but payment will not be completed until the work has been resumed in the next session.

17. If any question arises as to the interpretation of these Regulations, the decision of the Board shall be final.

18. The Regulations will take effect from August 1, 1917.

Given under the Seal of the Board of Education the 27th day of August, 1917.

L. A. SELBY-BIGGE.

APPENDIX II

Some Hall and Playground Games (Collected by Constance C. Craig)

Ball Games

1. Circle Ball.
2. Throw the Football.
3. Circular Tunnel Ball.
4. Ring Ball.
5. Centre Catch Ball.
6. Corner Ball.
7. Football Tag.
8. Circle Catch Ball.
9. Squat Ball.
10. Running Catch Ball.
11. Captain or American Ball.
12. Chase ball in two parallel lines.
13. Circle Cricket.
14. Hand Tennis.
15. Fungo.

1. Circle Ball

Apparatus.—Hand-ball, basket-ball or bean bag.

Children stand in circle 3 to 5 feet apart. The ball is tossed rapidly from one player to another, either over the heads of the players or across the ring.

Any player failing to catch the ball must at once sit down. The last one who remains standing wins the game.

The game can then be played sitting, each child standing up when the ball is uncaught, and the last one left sitting wins the game.

For very little children the space between the players should

be less, and the ball tossed in regular order from one player to the next.

2. Throw the Football

Apparatus.—A football or large ball.

Children sit in a ring on the floor, "tailor" fashion, one child stands within the ring.

Raising both hands above the head a boy in the circle throws the football across the ring, at the same time trying to hit the boy in the centre, who moves about quickly in order to dodge the ball. The ball continues to be thrown across from player to player, the throwers always endeavouring to hit the boy in the ring. When the boy is hit, his place is taken by the boy who threw the ball. If a large number are playing, two or more boys may stand within the ring.

3. Circular Tunnel Ball

Apparatus.—A football or large ball.

Boys stand in a ring with legs wide apart, each boy's feet touching those of the boy's next to him on either side. In this way a succession of arches are made round the ring.

A boy stands in the centre and endeavours to throw the football in between the legs of any boy in the circle; these boys bend over and try to stop, with their hands, the ball from going through, and bowl it back to the thrower. If the thrower succeeds in getting the ball through an arch, the boy between whose legs it passed is compelled to take his place in the centre.

4. Ring Ball

Apparatus.—A hand-ball.

Children take sides with an equal number on each side. Each side forms a ring, the children standing about 2 feet apart. The captain of each side stands in the centre of his ring and throws the ball to each member of his side in turn who throws it back to him. If a child fails to catch the ball he must pick it up, return to his place, and throw it back to the captain. Whichever side completes the throwing round the ring first scores a point. The side that scores the greatest number of points wins the game.

5. Centre Catch Ball

Apparatus.—Hand-ball or bean bag.

All the players but one stand in a circle about 3 feet apart. The odd player stands in the centre of the circle.

The ball is tossed rapidly from one player to another whilst the player in the centre tries to catch the ball. If he is successful the player who last touched the ball changes places with him, and so the game continues.

For elder children the game can be made more difficult by the children in the circle standing from 6 to 8 feet apart and the ball either thrown over the heads of one another or across the circle; the centre player tries either to catch the ball or knock it on to the floor. If successful, he changes places with the last thrower.

6. Corner Ball

Apparatus.—Basket-ball.

The ground is marked off into a space about 25 feet by 30 feet. This is divided across by a centre line. In the further corner of each half a small square goal is marked out. Two goals being in each court.

The players are divided into two equal teams—each team taking up the position in its own court and placing a goal-man in each of the goals in the opponent's court.

The players must always remain in their own court. They place themselves in various positions, and always take care to guard well each of the goals at their rear. The object of the game is to throw the ball over the heads of the opposing party to one's own goal-men. The goal-men may not step outside their goals. The ball is thrown backwards and forwards until one goal-man succeeds in catching the ball. A point is then scored to his side and the goal-man throws the ball back to his own side.

The side first scoring 20 points wins the game.

7. Football Tag

Apparatus.—A football.

At the start of the game each boy has 3 points. The players are scattered about promiscuously over the ground or

hall. One player starts by being the kicker—he kicks the ball gently towards any of the players, the idea being to "tag" one of the boys with the ball. The players move about and try to avoid being touched by the ball. Anyone tagged by the ball loses one of his 3 points and becomes the kicker. If anyone touches the ball with his hands or kicks higher than the chest of a boy he loses a point. Any player who loses 3 points is out of the game. The boy who remains longest in the field wins the game.

8. Circle Catch Ball

Apparatus.—Hand-ball.

Children form a circle. One child stands in the centre—he throws the ball into the air and as he does so steps back a pace and calls the name or number of a child in the circle. That child immediately runs forward and catches the ball; if he succeeds he returns to his place in the ring, but if he fails he changes places with the thrower.

9. Squat Ball

Apparatus.—A hand-ball.

All the children except one sit in a circle, "tailor" fashion. The odd player stands in the circle.

A tennis-ball is rolled quickly across the floor from one player to another whilst the odd player tries to secure the ball. If successful the last player who rolled the ball takes the place of the centre player.

The quicker the game is played the more difficult it will be for the centre player to secure the ball.

10. Running Catch Ball

Apparatus.—A hand-ball.

The children are scattered about the hall or playground and throw a tennis-ball from one to another, whilst the player who is chosen to be "IT" tries to tag a boy who holds the ball—or to get a hold of the ball itself. If the boy to whom the ball is thrown fails to catch it he must try to pick it up and throw it on before the odd man gets it. The place of the odd man is taken either by the boy who is tagged when in possession of

the ball or by the boy who fails to obtain a dropped ball before the odd man gets it.

11. Captain or American Ball

Apparatus.—A football.

The playground or hall is divided into two halves by a line drawn across the middle. On each side of this line circles about one yard in diameter are drawn down the sides and ends of the playground or hall at equal distances from one another. A line drawn through the centres of these circles would form an ellipse. The circles should be far enough apart to admit of easy and accurate passing of the football by hand from one to the other.

The players are divided into two teams, each team consisting of base-men, guards, and a fielder.

The base-men of one side stand in the circles on one side of the line and the base-men of the other side in the circles on the opposite side of line.

A guardsman of each side stands in front of an opponent base-man.

The two fielders, one belonging to either side, stand near the centre, one on either side of the dividing line.

One of the base-men of each side is captain. The two captains stand in the circles at either ends of the hall—opposite one another.

The object of the game is for the base-men to pass the ball to their own captain so that he catches it. One point being scored each time that he does so.

The opposing guardsmen try to prevent the ball passing from one base-man to another, and if they secure the ball throw it over to one of their own base-men on the opposite side of the dividing line.

The guardsmen for the most part remain near the base-men to whom they are assigned, but they may move about in the immediate neighbourhood whilst trying to seize the ball.

Rules to be observed :—

1. To secure possession the ball must be held in both hands. In case of dispute it should be tossed by the umpire between the contesting pairs.

2. If the ball goes out of play it should be started off again in the centre of the ground.

3. No base-man must step outside his circle and a guards-man may not go within a circle.

4. The ball must not be snatched or pushed from an opponent's hand.

5. No player must run with the ball in his hands and the ball must not be kicked.

6. The ball must be thrown from one player to another and not directly passed.

7. The ball must not be held by one player for more than three seconds.

If any of these rules are broken the opponents are allowed a free throw from one of their base-men to their captain without interference from any guard except the one in front of the captain.

The game is started by the umpire tossing the ball between the two fielders, both of whom try to catch it as it descends, the successful one throws it to a base-man on his side.

The work of the fielders is also to retrieve the ball when it goes out of play.

12. Chase Ball in Two Parallel Lines

Apparatus.—Two hand-balls.

Children line up in double file—open ranks in two paces and face one another. The players in each rank should stand arms' length apart.

Each rank numbers off—ones facing ones, twos facing twos, and so on.

At the given signal the balls are tossed obliquely starting from either end of the same lines, e.g. if 30 players are taking part in the game—that is 15 a side—1 starts by throwing obliquely to 2, 2 to 3, and so on, while simultaneously from the other end, No. 15 in the same line as the 1 starter throws obliquely to 14, 14 to 13, and so on.

When the two balls arrive at the last player these at once return them in the reverse order, until each arrive at the starting point. The team whose starter first receives back the ball counts one point.

If the ball is dropped by any player, he must recover it and return to his place before throwing to next player.

13. Circle Cricket

Apparatus.—A tennis-ball and racquet or cricket-bat.

The players stand in a circle of about 8 to 10 yards radius. The players stand about a yard apart.

In the centre a small circle, about 2 feet in diameter is made, and within this the batter stands with his heels together.

The ball, in the first place, is bowled by the player standing immediately in front of the batter in the outer circle. The object is to hit the batter's legs with the ball. The ball must be bowled underhand or not higher than the batter's knees.

The batter in defending and hitting back the ball may twist his body about, but must not move his heels.

After the first bowl the ball is bowled, either from the front, back, or side of the batter, by the fielder nearest it after a hit has been made or a ball missed.

The batter is out—

1. If hit below the knees by a bowler.
2. If a ball that has been hit is caught by a boy in the circle.

The place of the batter when out is taken by the boy who bowled or by the one who caught him out.

14. Hand Tennis

Apparatus.—A tennis-ball.

A cord is stretched across the playground, or a section of it, about 4 or 5 feet above the ground. This can easily be done by fastening a rope to basket-ball posts. The players are divided into two equal teams and each team re-divided into three squads. Squad A stands about five yards from the dividing cord, each player several feet apart, Squad B stands a few yards farther back and Squad C still farther behind. Each squad should have its own dividing line, and no player go beyond his line. The number of children in each squad depends upon the number of players.

A captain for each team is chosen and stands in the centre of Squad A. A tennis-ball is used and is put into play by the captain of one of the teams bouncing the ball on the ground and striking it forward with the hand as it rises. It must always go over the cord and may be returned by the member of the opposing team who is in the most convenient

position to receive the ball. The ball may be struck either before it touches the ground or after it has bounced once.

A point is scored by the opposing team—

1. If the ball is not returned over the cord.
2. If the server fails to hit the ball over the cord when serving.
3. If a ball is hit out of bounds.
4. If the ball hits a player.

Before starting the games the number of points to be scored for each game should be fixed. Twenty points to a game is a convenient number.

15. Fungo

Apparatus.—A tennis-ball and a bat.

This game is a form of cricket and for quite small boys will probably be enjoyed more than ordinary cricket, as it does not necessitate the long waiting about for an innings and it also brings more keenness into the fielding.

A single wicket is used and a covered tennis-ball. One player is chosen as first batter and one as first bowler, the rest are fielders.

Runs are scored by each player.

Whoever "catches" a hit ball, or stops three balls hit by the batter, or hits the wicket whilst the batter is taking a run becomes next batter and the out-coming batter takes the place of the bowler.

Running and Catching Games

16. Cross Tag.
17. Snatch the Handkerchief.
18. Prisoners' Base.
19. Japanese Tag.
20. Squirrels in Trees.
21. Come Over the Line.
22. Last Pair.
23. Race Game with Hoops.
24. Birds, Beasts, and Fishes.
25. Hopping Bases.
26. Flag Race.

16. Cross Tag

One player is chosen as chaser. He begins by calling out the name of another player and at once gives chase. A third player may run in between these two, whereupon he becomes the one to be chased. These two are again crossed by another player who then becomes the one to be pursued. And so whenever a player crosses between the chaser and the chased he becomes the one who is chased. Whenever a chaser catches a boy that boy becomes the chaser, and again starts by calling the name of a player to be tagged.

17. Snatch the Handkerchief

Apparatus.—A club, handkerchief, or bean bag.

Children take sides—equal numbers on each side.

Two parallel lines are marked off on the floor about 24 yards apart.

Each side stands with toes to line.

A club or block of wood with handkerchief or bean bag on top is placed in centre midway between each side.

The boys are then numbered off, one side taking the odd numbers and the other side the even, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, etc., on one side, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, etc., on other side; 1 stands opposite 10, 3 opposite 8, and so on. At the word "GO" the end boys of either side (1 and 10) run forward, each trying to pick up the handkerchief and return with it to his place, before being touched by the other boy. If the boy is caught he stands behind the other side and is a prisoner.

Next players 3 and 8 run for the handkerchief, and so on till all have run.

The side securing the most prisoners wins the game.

18. Prisoners' Base

The ground or hall floor is divided into two equal parts with a small base or prison marked off at the farther end of each division.

Equal numbers of players are on each side of the middle line. If they venture over the line into the enemy's camp and are caught, they are put into the prison where they must remain until tagged by one of their own side. Both prisoner

and rescuer may be tagged and brought back into the prison before reaching their own side.

The game is won by the side which has taken prisoners the whole of the enemy's men, or when a free man enters the enemy's prison when it is empty of prisoners.

19. Japanese Tag

One player is chosen to be chaser, his object is to tag any of the players. The player who is tagged then becomes the chaser, but whenever a player is tagged or touched, he must place his left hand on the spot touched, whatever part of his body it may be, and in that position must chase the other players. He is only relieved of this position when he has tagged some one else.

20. Squirrels in Trees

Most of the players stand in groups of three, placing their hands on the others' shoulders. This represents hollow trees. One child stands in each of these hollow trees and represents the squirrel. There is also an odd squirrel without a tree. When the leader claps his hands all the squirrels must change trees, and whilst doing so the odd squirrel tries to secure an empty tree—if he does so the one who is left out becomes the odd squirrel.

21. Come Over the Line

The playground or hall is marked off into three sections by two lines—the middle space being the largest. The child who is catcher stands in the middle space, the rest of the children stand in either of the outer spaces. These children run across from one outer space to the other, while the catcher endeavours to catch anyone who comes into the middle space. Whoever is tagged joins hands with the catcher, and the two proceed to catch the others. Each one as he is tagged joins hands with the other tagged ones—and so the game proceeds until all are caught. No one can be caught if the tag line is broken. The last one tagged becomes the first catcher in the next game.

22. Last Pair

The children are arranged in pairs, all facing the same way. One child stands at the head of the line facing the same way. When he calls out "Last Pair Go" the last couple in the line run forward towards the front on opposite sides of the line and try to join hands beyond the catcher without being tagged. If one is tagged he becomes the catcher, and the previous catcher and the uncaught child stand as the first pair in the line. If the runners succeed in joining hands without being tagged the same catcher must try again with the next pair.

23. Race Games with Hoops

Apparatus.—Some hoops.

1. Ordinary flat racing, either bowling with right hand or with left hand.
2. Obstacle racing—between stones, round posts, etc.
3. Forward and backward skipping with hoops from starting point to goal.
4. Slow racing—last man in wins, but hoop must not fall to the ground.
5. Bowling with hand only.
6. Bowlers remain stationary, the bowler who sends the hoop the longest distance wins.

24. Birds, Beasts, and Fishes

Children divide up into two equal sides.

Each side stands in line about 3 yards behind their boundary line, the boundary lines being made by a chalk line drawn across either end of the hall or playground. One side after choosing the name of a bird, beast, or fish walks across to the opponents' boundary line, and after standing and toeing the line the captain gives the first letter of the word chosen, i.e. if the bird "sparrow" is chosen the captain calls out "A bird beginning with 'S'"; the opposing side try to guess the name of the bird. As soon as the correct answer is given the children who have given the word run back and try to get beyond their own boundary line before they are caught by the other side who chase after them. Anyone caught is taken back to the chasing side. The chasing side may not go beyond the opponents' boundary line; if anyone does so he can be

tagged by the other side and is taken as one of them. The second side now choose a word and come across to the boundary line of the first side and so the game proceeds.

If a side after a given time fails to guess the word, the word is told by the captain of the choosing side, and his side immediately run back to their own boundary and are chased by the opponents as before—but in this case the choosing side are again allowed to choose another word. At the end of a given time the side that has the largest number of children wins the game.

25. Hopping Bases

Two bases are marked off some 20 yards apart.

All the children except one assemble in one of the bases. The odd one stands in the centre mid-way between the two bases. The game is started by all the players hopping on one leg to the other base whilst the odd man, also hopping, tries to tag any of the players before they reach the opposite base. The ones tagged become the prisoners and help the odd man to tag the other players. Any player who touches the ground with both feet also becomes a prisoner. No player must make the return journey to the first base until all have crossed over or have been made prisoners.

26. Flag Race

Apparatus.—Some flags or bean bags.

A starting line is marked across the middle of the hall or playground.

The children are divided into teams.

The leader of each team stands with toes to the starting line and the members of each team stand behind their leader, about 2 feet apart. Each team should be 3 or 4 yards apart.

On the boundary line at the opposite end of the hall or playground a child should stand facing each team; if there are six teams six children should be standing on this line in a straight line with each team.

The leader of each team holds a flag, each group having its own colour.

(Flags can easily be made by pasting coloured paper on to sticks, or bean bags may be used instead of flags.)

At a given signal No. 1 in each team runs or hops to the other end of the ground, round the child who is standing there, and back to their own starting point. In the meantime the children in every team have taken a step forward, so that 2's are now at the starting line. The flags are handed to the 2's who immediately run forward as did the 1's, and the 1's take the places of the last children in each team; 3's are next at the starting line, and so the race continues until all have raced. The winners are those whose last runner is first back at the starting line.

Miscellaneous Games

27. Target Toss.
28. Animal Blind-man's Buff.
29. Pull over the Club.
30. Stations.
31. Magic Music.
32. Pull the Rope.
33. Cockfight.
34. Cat and Mouse (Blindfolded).
35. Find the Ring.
36. Jack be Nimble.
37. Knights.
38. Clumps.

27. Target Toss

Apparatus.—Three bean bags.

Three concentric circles are drawn on the floor. For small children the inner circle should be about 2 feet in diameter, the next 4 feet, and the outer one 6 feet.

For older children the circles should be smaller.

From 10 to 30 feet from the outer rim of the largest circle a line should be drawn which represents the throwing line.

Toeing the line each player, in turn, throws in succession the three bags towards the target. If a bag lands within the centre circle, the player counts 3; if between the centre circle and the next, the count is 2; and if between the middle and largest circle, the count is 1.

A bag landing on the line does not count at all.

The player wins who has the highest score in five rounds of the game.

28. Animal Blind-man's Buff

Children stand in circle holding hands. One child in the centre is blindfolded with stick in hand.

Children in circle dance round until blind man taps three times on the floor with his stick. Then all the children stand still.

The blind man then points to one child in the circle who at once grasps the stick. This player is told by the blind man to imitate the noise of a cat, dog, donkey, duck, or some other animal. This he does, and if the blind man guesses the name of the child, that child takes his place in the centre. If he is unsuccessful, the game continues with the same blind man.

29. Pull over the Club

The children form a ring taking hands. An Indian club about 18 or 24 inches high is placed in the centre.

The children move round in a circle and each child tries by pulling or forcing to make one of his fellows knock over the club, while the object of each one is carefully to avoid doing so by twisting about or leaping over the club.

The player who knocks down the club or breaks the ring by letting go hands must drop out of the ring.

The game continues until the last boy remains. He is the winner.

If there are many players, they can be divided up into several groups, each group forming a small circle.

30. Stations

Children stand in a circle or square formation. Each child is given the name of a town which he represents.

One boy or girl is blindfolded and stands in the middle of the circle or square. Another child represents the station-master. He stands outside the formation and calls out the names of two towns. The children representing these towns change places and, whilst they are doing so, the blindfolded man tries to catch one of them. If he does so, that one takes his place as blind man. If he is not successful, two other names are called out.

This game may also be played in two parallel lines' formation, the lines standing about 12 feet apart.

31. Magic Music

Children sit in a ring on the floor: one child goes out of the room whilst a thimble or some small article is hidden about the person of one of the sitting children.

The seeker is called in and music is played, or the children may sing some well-known and familiar song. As the seeker nears the object, the music becomes softer and softer until the object is found; the farther he gets away from it the louder is the music.

32. Pull the Rope

Apparatus.—A rope and a bean bag.

A rope 4 yards long is tied at the ends to form a circle.

Boys take sides—equal numbers on each side.

Two boys from each side grasp the rope with right hand standing so as to form a square, the sides of which will be 1 yard. The boys on the same side stand opposite one another.

A bean bag is placed a yard away from each boy outside the square.

At the signal "GO" they all pull strenuously with the right hand and try to pick up the bean bag which is near to them. The boy who first picks it up falls out and another boy from his side takes his place. The side who first uses up all their players wins the game.

33. Cockfight

Apparatus.—Some stout sticks about 2 ft. 6 in. long.

Equal sides are chosen, and form parallel lines down either side of the hall, the opponents standing opposite one another—as equally matched in size and strength as possible. The opponents in turn take their places in the centre of the room. The two players place a stick under their knees, the arms under the stick and the hands clasped in front of the knees. Each then endeavours to tip the opponent over. The winning boy counts one point to his side. When all the players have contested, the side which scores the most points wins.

34. Cat and Mouse (Blindfolded)

All the children except two form two lines facing each other. The two odd players represent the cat and mouse. They are both blindfolded. The cat mews and the mouse squeaks and in this way the cat tries to catch the mouse. When caught two other children are chosen to be cat and mouse.

35. Find the Ring

Apparatus.—Some string and a ring.

All the players except one stand or sit in a ring. The odd player stands in the centre.

A long piece of string tied at the ends so as to form a circle large enough to reach round has on it a small ring.

The players pass the ring from one to another whilst the centre player tries to detect who has it. In order to deceive the guesser the players make passes to indicate the passage of the ring even if it is not in their vicinity.

When the player in the centre thinks he knows who has the ring he cries "Stop" and immediately all movement must cease.

He then calls upon that player to remove his hands from the string. If his guess is right that player takes the place of the odd man. If incorrect, the ring continues to be passed, the same player remaining in the centre until the right guess has been made.

36. Jack be Nimble

A game for very little children.

At intervals of a few yards round the hall the children build with their bricks candlesticks. This is done by placing bricks one on top of the other to the height of six or eight inches.

The players run in single file and jump with both feet at once over the candlestick, while all repeat the old rhyme—

"Jack be nimble
Jack be quick
And Jack jump over the candlestick."

About six or eight children at a time should be chosen to complete the circle of jumping.

37. Knights

Sides are chosen. The stronger boys of each side are chosen to be the horses and the smaller boys the knights. When all are mounted a signal is given and the opposing teams advance to meet one another.

The knights of one party try to unseat the knights of the other.

When a knight is off his horse he is out of the game.

The side who unseats all its opponents wins the game.

38. Clumps

Sides are chosen and a captain for each side.

Each captain sends a player out of the room. The rest of the players sit on the floor in two rings—the players of one side forming one ring and the players of the other forming another ring at the other end of the hall. The players of each ring should sit closely together and speak softly so as not to be heard by the opposing side. The two players who have gone outside the hall agree upon some person or object to be guessed by the rest of the players. They then return and each sits with the players of the opposing side. Each side asks questions in order to find out the object to be guessed. These questions may only be answered by "Yes" or "No" or "I do not know".

The side who first guesses correctly clap their hands and the captain claims for his side the two players who were being questioned.

Two other players are then sent out and so the game continues.

The Games to be found in "The Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Schools," published by the Board of Education, are also most suitable games for Play Centres.

Cricket, Football, Rounders and Net-ball, which are perhaps the most popular games in Play Centres, need not be described here, as they are so well known to all.

APPENDIX III

Mr. Holland's Report on the Vacation School, Passmore Edwards Settlement, for 1903

"The Objects of the School

"The School has for its object the giving of its pupils a good time. Had the children shown signs of weariness or dislike we should have at once deemed the venture a failure; but as the opposite symptoms were those invariably displayed, we have naturally concluded the school was a success. The school aimed at giving the children something to do in place of roaming listlessly about in street or alley, with nothing to tempt them to action save the ever-present opportunity for mischief. Children such as we had cannot amuse themselves. They have little initiative and imagination, and, as a rule, unless acting under guidance, fail to give their desire for amusement and occupation suitable shape. They roam about, suffering from a peculiar childish ennui, and actually long for the return of the normal schooldays and the cessation of the wearisome holidays. The purpose of the school was to change all this. It sought to satisfy the hunger for occupation by setting the children something to find out, or something to do. It sought to care for the physical well-being of the scholars by carefully organised exercises. It sought to raise the children's ideals of morals and conduct by direct and indirect instruction. It sought to show the children that coming to know and learning to do are, in themselves, some of the truest of pleasures. It sought to afford pleasure chiefly to those children who were doomed from one cause or another to remain in London throughout the vacation and so go sea-less, fresh-air-less, and joyless.

"How we got the Children

"In both years the children were those of some dozen neighbouring schools, both Board and Voluntary. Application forms were placed in the hands of the teachers of these schools, who filled in the applications and forwarded them to the Settlement. Besides disposing of 1500 forms, we afterwards received no less than 329 personal applications for places. There were returned to us 1352 of the 1500 forms, so that altogether we had 1681 applications for the 750 places, which we calculated would give us an average attendance of 600. At the outset we issued some 750 invitations. Some applicants only asked permission to attend a fortnight or three weeks. Some others left through sickness, removal, or an unforeseen holiday out of town. These places we filled as soon as possible by others, so that at the close of the session we found that we had invited to the school 1149 children for the whole or for part of the time. We sought to keep the number on the roll at about 750, and as a matter of fact the actual figures have worked out to an average of 751. The children were invited by card of admission sent through the post, and each invitation was accompanied by a notice stating that parents had liberty to withdraw their children from the religious exercises if they wished, but only four applications for withdrawal from one or other of the forms of service were sent in.

"Attendance

"In spite of many wet days—there were quite 40 per cent in both years—the average attendance throughout the last session reached 601·9. This is equivalent to a percentage on the average number on the roll of 80, which must be considered very good, especially in view of the fact that no machinery whatever for ensuring, or inducing, or improving attendance was used, save the constant replacement of scholars who left. The ordinary attractiveness of the work produced this admirable result alone. The scholars were genuinely anxious to come. They really liked the work and were often found outside the gate more than an hour before the time for opening. Not infrequently they expressed the liveliest dissatisfaction when they found they had reached the end of the last lesson.

"Assembly and Opening Exercises

"Each meeting of the school in fine weather was held in the open air in the garden on the east side of the Settlement Buildings. Children were admitted fifteen minutes before the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Exactly at the hour, the door was closed, a whistle was sounded, the scholars fell into lines according to their classes, and for the next fifteen minutes a brief and simple religious service was conducted, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays by clergy of the Church of England, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays by ministers of the Free Churches. The exercises included the singing of a hymn, the collective repetition of the Lord's Prayer, the recital of some of the Beatitudes, and a brief address by the officiating clergyman. In wet weather the school assembled in the Gymnasium and the religious exercises were conducted there.

"Curriculum

"Our curriculum embraced Manual Training (including Woodwork for the older boys); Housewifery and cooking (for the older girls, and once or twice for boys also); Singing; Gymnastics (including boxing for the older boys); Musical Drill and Physical Exercises; Story-telling; Clay Modelling; Dancing; Nature Study (Botany and Zoology from Life); Brushwork and Drawing; Reading-room (Story-books); Dramatics (the pieces prepared were performed before the whole school on breaking-up day); Needlework (chiefly Doll-dressing); Basket Work and Cane Weaving; Lantern Story-telling; Ambulance Work and Nursing (even to washing and dressing a baby); Swimming (for both boys and girls); and last, but not least, Sand-digging. With the exception of Woodwork, Housewifery, Needlework, and Cane Weaving, the lessons were only thirty-five minutes each in duration. This gave sufficient time without tiring the scholars. Moreover, the subjects were so arranged that a child as far as possible got one lesson in the building and one in the garden alternately. A few children who displayed special aptitude and expressed a genuine desire to take up any one particular subject were allowed to spend as much time as they wished at that subject.

"The Division into Classes

"The children were divided into ten classes according to the standard they had reached in the ordinary schools. The ages ranged from five to fourteen. The two classes of youngest children constituted a separate Kindergarten, and worked on a special time-table under a responsible mistress. The work taken included stories, building, games, paper-folding, cutting and pasting, nature study, chalking, singing, colouring, clay-modelling, soap-bubble blowing, skipping, boat-sailing, and other recreative occupations—the delight of infant years.

"The Building and Garden

"Although not originally designed to serve as a school, the Settlement has such unique architectural and other charms as to more than compensate probably for its slight inconveniences and ramifications. The very difference between it and the buildings to which the children were ordinarily accustomed has doubtless much to do with the enjoyment of the scholars and the success of the experiment. The charms of the buildings were greatly enhanced by the large, beautifully designed, neatly kept, and well-wooded garden in its rear, and on seven gravelled sites in this garden our outdoor lessons were given when the weather permitted. Beyond the garden again was a piece of rough ground—the site of Charles Dickens' house—on which was our sand hill, where with shovel and pail the scholars made the most of their sea-less shore. An adequate conception of the delight with which the children worked on this sand could only be gained by those who saw them actually engaged there.

"The Change from Lesson to Lesson

"Every thirty-five minutes a bell was rung throughout the building and garden, and at this signal all the classes which were not continuing the same work during the next period were conducted by their teachers to the place of assembly. On their arrival the teachers placed themselves at the head of the squads indicated as theirs for the next lesson on the time-table, and marched them off to their new work. This constant gathering at a rendezvous, although seemingly unnecessary and

formal, was the best and most economical method of avoiding confusion and eventual waste of time.

"The Staff and Voluntary Helpers

"The classes had a roll of some thirty-seven or thirty-eight pupils, of whom thirty or thirty-one were, on the average, present. As soon as this number was exceeded evidences began to appear of difficulty in working, and for vacation school purposes our experience shows that thirty in attendance must be considered the limit. For each of these classes we provided one whole-time teacher—except that, for the Kindergarten, three whole-time teachers were allowed for the roll of seventy-five; for the Woodwork class the boys only of a normal class (eighteen or nineteen on roll) were deemed enough for one teacher, and the girls to a like number were deemed enough for Cooking and Housewifery. In addition to the teachers in singing, dancing, and musical drill, two accompanists were provided, and in the Gymnastic class we had an instructor for the boys and an instructress for the girls. Over and above all these we had a mistress who helped generally where needed. This made a staff equivalent to sixteen whole-time teachers. Each teacher was made mainly responsible for one subject for which she had special qualifications. The monotony which this arrangement necessarily involved was lessened by the freedom which teachers were given to exchange their prescribed work for that of another teacher by mutual arrangement. The teachers were mainly drawn from Secondary and Kindergarten Training Centres and Schools, and some were graduates of Universities.

"Mrs. Humphry Ward, with the assistance of her Secretary, Miss Churcher, selected these teachers, and every one of them proved herself quiet competent to deal with her classes under the novel conditions which prevailed. Some teachers only worked part of the session and no teacher had less than one week's clear holiday after the close of the school, nearly all having three weeks or a month.

"The school was organised on the mixed principle, and we found no difficulty arising from this. On the other hand, we found there were distinct advantages. The mixture of the sexes added variety and charm, stimulated interest, afforded excellent opportunities of humanising lads and teaching them

politeness, permitted brother and sister to be frequently engaged in the same occupation, and accustomed both boys and girls to live naturally in each other's presence without excess of bashfulness on the one hand or frivolity on the other.

"Discipline and Tone

"The comparative ease with which discipline was maintained was most marked, and the general tone of the children left little to be desired. They were orderly in coming, orderly in assembling, orderly in class, and orderly in going home. They were cheerfully obedient, happy and free, hardly ever venturing to presume on the kindness shown them, and invariably keeping within the bounds of reason. Of course, some few needed stern words at private interviews, but the fact that in neither year has a single child had to be expelled for unruly behaviour is eloquent testimony to the beneficent influence of the school on the child's holiday disposition. The fact was, that the fear of expulsion was a very potent deterrent on would-be offenders. They so liked the school that they did not venture to run the risk of being told not to come again. Save this threat, no form of punishment was used whatever.

"The Work

"Although the object of the school was primarily to give pleasure rather than to make a brave exhibition, we found that work of exceptionally good quality was done. This was especially true this year of the Woodwork, Nature Study, and Gymnastics. The children found useful occupation pleasurable, and a number came to recognise, perhaps for the first time, the blessedness of having something to do worth doing. The joy with which the very little ones carried home in triumph the tiny products of their own industry was only rivalled by the genuine and healthy pride of the older boys and girls when they received as gifts at the end of the session the results of their four weeks' work in the classes.

"Apparatus and Materials

"The school owed much to the London School Board for the loan of a complete Manual Training equipment and other

apparatus and furniture, as also for the supply at cost price of all consumable materials. Without this invaluable aid the experiment could not have been carried out as satisfactorily as it was.

"Special Occasions

"The school met on the five school days of the week, except on Bank Holiday, when the school was closed, and on the final day when the two schools met in the morning at 10 and jointly witnessed a dramatic and miscellaneous display, including drill, dancing, singing, and the like. The programme had been given the evening previous before the parents, all of whom had been invited to see the school at work. The gratitude of these parents toward the promoters of the school was freely expressed, and it is difficult to decide who welcomed the school the more, the pupils or their mothers and fathers. On the Tuesday of the first week of the Vacation School, a meeting was held at the Settlement in the afternoon and was addressed by Mrs. Humphry Ward, Sir William Anson, M.P., and Sir Thomas Barlow. Sir William Anson expressed his gratification that the experiment was being repeated, and hoped its influence on education would be felt throughout the country."

APPENDIX IV

Attendance-Charts of the Evening Play Centres Committee, 1918-19

Summer Term, 1918, *April* 8 *to July* 20

Week Ending	Battersea.	Bermondsey.	B. Green.	Bow.	Camberwell.	Chelsea.	Deptford.	Fulham.	Haggerston.	Holloway.	St. John's Rd., Hoxton.	Napier St., Hoxton.	Islington.	Kennington.	N. Kensington.	Lambeth.	Latimer Rd.	Bell St., Marylebone.	Senior St., Paddington.	Leo St., Peckham.	Gloucester Rd., Peckham.	Poplar.	Bow Creek, Poplar.	Ratcliff.	St. Pancras.	Somers T.	Stepney.	Tooting.	Walworth.	Total.
April 13	1058	1520	1315	1348	1384	843	1188	1163	1445	1321	1346	1158	1412	1868	721	788	1127	1845		1108	1401	1318	307	1288	1021	1174	1150	909	1072	33,598
,, 20	1070	1283	1211	1232	1147	891	1116	781	1336	1085	1398	1256	1390	2124	732	792	1085	1599		814	1515	1094	334	1348	1160	1062	1298	836	1252	32,231
,, 27	1161	1696	1489	1484	1465	941	2372	1012	1448	1237	1741	1545	1424	2299	923	891	1141	1365	1600	867	1987	1156	309	1688	1486	1375	1245	1067	1343	39,857
May 4	1105	1705	1473	1367	1606	1131	1950	1050	1373	1260	1609	1610	1401	1861	1074	818	1129	1720	1807	931	1498	1177	283	1595	1352	1272	1201	1048	1336	38,742
,, 11	1104	1423	1527	1482	1402	1086	1639	933	1285	1230	1485	1499	1356	1522	1124	845	1252	1429	1748	1194	1344	1023	255	1475	1246	1208	1180	979	1166	36,441
,, 18	1078	1256	1162	1048	1347	985	1455	765	1180	1011	1516	1315	1171	1606	872	723	988	1040	1169	1224	915	1063	281	1218	1301	1253	891	765	1138	31,736
,, 25	390	773	466	512	497	473	656	340	623	472	714	610	565	694	552	344	401	419	641	403	431	410	196	526	613	493	466	387	549	14,616
June 1	1035	1439	1023	1023	1288	906	1675	781	1168	1026	1447	1344	1342	1415	829	777	1046	1073	1542	973	1478	861	291	1086	1104	1341	1138	848	1113	32,412
,, 8	1054	1415	1379	1211	1447	1177	1527	817	1168	954	1448	1558	1274	1761	979	771	1150	1333	1589	969	1471	831	250	1267	1234	1408	1099	713	881	34,135
,, 15	922	1234	1228	1145	1177	1005	1302	826	1028	1125	1364	1304	1250	1706	639	709	843	1333	1471	848	1502	840	268	1066	1216	1270	1521	756	1078	31,976
,, 22	1085	1279	1221	995	1322	920	1413	1028	1116	967	1341	1508	1329	1474	973	723	1190	1467	1262	882	1430	867	277	1165	1281	1253	1098	886	1166	31,702
,, 29	1044	1289	1207	1146	1334	952	1486	888	1135	789	1471	1411	1017	1573	909	541	1205	1458	1345	851	1419	820	296	1277	1123	1129	1215	851	962	32,144
July 6	1059	1169	1067	1115	1266	747	1176	535	1010	672	1273	1107	828	1287	496	714	985	1186	1250	643	1181	810	305	1069	1253	1022	877	755	908	27,765
,, 13	918	1143	1142	863	1056	597	1129	564	1023	821	1359	993	1090	1375	700	694	934	906	1167	664	1085	787	225	963	1218	1072	989	645	817	26,929
,, 20	939	1145	1131	944	1288	644	1520	701	1278	847	1577	1264	1087	1813	644	675	919	1034	1001	547	1502	831	177	1068	1321	1118	1005	749	830	29,599
																													Total	473,883

Attendance-Charts of the Evening Play Centres Committee, 1918-19

Winter Term, 1918, *September* 9 *to December* 12

Week Ending	Battersea.	Bermondsey.	B. Green.	Bow.	Camberwell.	Chelsea.	Deptford.	Fulham.	Haggerston.	Holloway.	St. John's Rd., Hoxton.	Napier St., Hoxton.	Islington.	Kennington.	N. Kensington.	Lambeth.	Latimer Rd.	Bell St., Marylebone.	Senior St., Paddington.	Leo St., Peckham.	Gloucester Rd., Peckham.	Poplar.	Bow Creek, Poplar.	Ratcliff.	St. Pancras.	Somers T.	Stepney.	Tooting.	Walworth.	Total.
Sept. 14	1394	1495	2188	1436	1185	1398	2011	850	1429	1091	2267	1608	940	1999	662	1033	1976	1793	1066	2191	1466	1519	410	1289	1139	1928	1597	1597	1350	42,297
,, 21	1240	1661	1549	1739	1377	1305	1710	861	1490	1095	2654	1518	1065	2075	975	1052	1490	1909	1073	1727	1800	1929	410	1303	1346	1987	1465	1344	1746	42,995
,, 28	1652	1410	1585	2374	1204	1212	1748	2458	2044	1035	1894	1879	1658	2061	930	1100	1536	1074	1282	1732	1181	2088	331	2403	1246	1742	2405	1801	1388	45,221
Oct. 5	2168	1558	1958	2713	1276	1066	1929	2332	2450	1050	2384	2255	2369	1913	1234	1262	1768	1186	1459	1770	1519	2721	367	3138	1428	1539	3335	1659	1944	53,750
,, 12	2371	1966	1879	3069	1304	1212	2545	2160	3138	985	2685	2901	2319	1726	1329	1297	1561	1113	1611	1951	1522	2524	366	3886	1760	1573	3068	1561	2171	57,553
,, 19	2152	1701	1945	2524	1268	1161	2566	1881	2888	1029	2677	2706	2028	1919	1339	1737	1807	1383	1693	1537	1647	2247	322	3239	2025	1880	2712	1479	2259	55,751
,, 26	1672	1825	1666	2206	1243	895	2093	1575	2847	917	2091	2606	2030	1719	1383	1907	1380	1462	1224	1353	1598	2248	329	3198	1818	1949	2436	1290	2271	52,231
Nov. 2	841	750	567	1040	521	389	283	800	1435	499	1072	1209	787	792	556	750	630	614	582	586	620	838	221	1313	1095	952	1177	630	1064	22,553
,, 9	1715	1113	1168	2104	1061	624	1391	1417	2386	926	1930	2260	1916	1790	1122	1356	1176	1263	1210	920	1262	1633	332	2493	1947	1900	2058	1039	1702	43,224
,, 16	1149	543	976	795	716	476	867	1012	1131	617	1315	1424	1127	1022	879	944	867	903	768	554	671	775	300	1594	1160	1001	967	655	795	26,003
,, 23	1360	1037	1551	1875	930	645	1371	1404	2113	972	2130	2342	1974	1533	987	1513	1141	1121	909	927	1443	1730	282	2265	1629	1550	1823	978	1576	41,141
,, 30	1607	1136	1730	2422	1263	974	1624	1580	2510	1104	2523	2323	2198	1676	1246	1616	1366	1408	1245	1338	1578	1826	314	2670	1981	1787	2114	1268	1743	48,170
Dec. 7	1767	1376	1979	2459	1385	1282	1820	1650	2484	1136	2570	2178	2208	1713	1273	1737	1268	1510	1371	1576	1465	1740	353	2986	2083	2034	2532	1418	1802	51,155
,, 14	1342	1050	1358	1906	1242	1089	1578	1242	2024	998	2196	1660	2110	1572	909	1279	1038	1354		1113	1370	1429	223	2292	1914	1727	1875	1034	1409	41,589
																													Total	623,633

Attendance-Charts of the Evening Play Centres Committee, 1919

Spring Term, 1919, *January 6 to April 12*

Week Ending	Battersea.	Bermondsey.	B. Green.	Bow.	Camberwell.	Chelsea.	Deptford.	Fulham.	Haggerston.	Holloway.	St. John's Rd., Hoxton.	Napier St., Hoxton.	Islington.	Kennington.	N. Kensington.	Lambeth.	Latimer Rd.	Bell St., Marylebone.	Senior St., Paddington.	Leo St., Peckham.	Gloucester Rd., Peckham.	Poplar.	Bow Creek, Poplar.	Ratcliff.	St. Pancras.	Somers T.	Stepney.	Tooting.	Walworth.	Total.
Jan. 11	1824	1133	1887	1955	1337	1231	1842	1725	2549	1109	2318	1866	1909	1806	955	1694	1583	1465	1211	1681	1321	1855	360	2800	1875	1644	2487	970	1635	48,037
,, 18	1760	1194	1937	2250	1733	1035	1727	1558	2752	1087	2529	1881	2033	1729	1042	1880	1266	1551	980	1684	1517	1981	367	2670	1854	1638	2403	1379	1836	49,442
,, 25	1781	1436	2032	2167	1813	1139	1880	1142	2626	1184	2549	2001	1982	1839	1018	1699	1454	1594	997	1680	1588	2280	337	2881	1916	1447	2201	1450	1728	49,148
Feb. 1	1735	1375	1860	2083	1894	1069	1935	1300	2485	1040	2398	2107	1906	1935	925	1370	1428	1563	883	1850	1574	2045	335	2644	1619	1500	2234	1409	1677	47,778
,, 8	1451	1172	1611	1816	1723	909	1731	1322	2264	930	2321	1921	1671	1812	1023	1400	1382	1654	1024	1340	1624	1882	319	2466	1656	1562	2090	1245	1556	44,877
,, 15	1444	1267	1689	2152	1994	1052	1773	1553	2551	932	2514	2115	1929	1976	1105	1201	1468	1806	1082	1250	2007	2221	346	2543	1728	1590	2304	1351	1834	48,778
,, 22	1406	1403	1628	1887	1939	829	1815	1170	2509	1057	2687	2359	1898	1847	1135	1295	1558	1770	1016	1491	2099	1943	346	2771	1745	1379	2359	1333	1795	48,269
Mar. 1	1253	1337	1397	1688	1756	929	1813	1350	1895	1053	1985	1946	1894	2087	1067	1156	1175	1448	1056	1494	1571	1500	307	2369	1525	1486	2167	1239	1434	43,377
,, 8	592	1185	1481	839	997	762	1058	1003	1681	589	1123	1033	1757	1355	1112	731	772	1507	905	1360	887	1557	305	2023	1707	1160	1980	1164	1379	36,167
,, 15	1011	1327	1316	1529	1519	776	1462	1000	1765	1066	1845	1495	1838	1559	711	1085	1292	1549	979	1378	1551	1520	279	2427	1656	1343	1721	1426	1291	42,483
,, 22	1002	1289	1394	1355	1450	734	1441	931	1961	954	1813	1223	1707	1764	956	932	1195	1347	700	1176	1392	1239	289	2293	1287	1172	1997	1157	1278	41,500
,, 29	1133	1368	1299	1378	1429	790	1462	946	1872	1049	1662	1444	1705	1796	886	894	1429	1343	715	1250	1157	1516	266	2066	1164	1400	1643	1156	1363	40,404
April 5	793	821	972	1259	1458	778	1248	865	1220	788	1484	1459	1412	1560	869	999	1126	1065	839	1328	1119	1296	280	1739	1483	1069	1233	1089	1213	36,751
,, 12	852	846	673	1496	1465	787	1016	942	1144	957	1217	1183	1440	1303	818	689	1021	1000	1000	697	1219	1339	267	1484	1225	1396	1179	1226	1190	34,751
																													Total	611,762

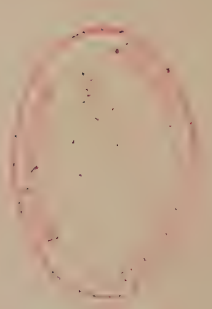
APPENDIX V

Total Attendances at the London Play Centres, 1907-18

Year.	No. of Centres.	Attendances.
1907	10	418,113
1908	12	619,521
1909	13	738,496
1910	15	933,833
1911	17	1,170,962
1912	19	1,322,936
1913	20	1,510,381
1914	20	1,752,173
1915	21	1,522,716
1916	21*	1,193,266
1917	26	1,380,933
1 Jan., 1918, to 31 Mar., 1918	28	400,988
31 Mar., 1918, to 31 Mar., 1919	32	1,709,278

* Two of these Centres were closed in the autumn.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, ABERDEEN



This Book must be returned to the Library on, or before, the last date shown below

9 MAR 1940

12 FEB 1941

METHUEN
& Co
LIMITED